

135 comfort in the Sun.  
104-6. In Christ all holiness. W. A. Clarke

AN  
Expository  
COMMENT,  
DOCTRINAL,  
CONTROVERSIAL

AND  
PRACTICAL

Upon the whole First CHAPTER  
OF THE  
Second EPISTLE of St Paul  
TO THE

Corinthians.

By *Anthony Burgesse* Pastor of *Sutton-Coldfield*  
in *Warwickshire*.

LONDON,  
Printed by *A.M.* for *Abel Roper* at the Signe  
of the Sunne in Fleetstreet, near  
St Dunstons Church, 1661.

164



AN

Expository

COMMENT

DOCTRINAL

CONTRIVERSAL

TRACICAL

UPON THE

Second of St Paul

Corinthians

By Andrew Bingham Pastor of Salem-Colefield  
in Massachusetts

Printed by A. M. for M. R. at the Sign  
of the Sun in Fleet Street near  
St Dunstons Church 1861.



---

TO THE  
READER.

---

Reader,



*Mongst the several reasons, why there ought to be a special care and holy diligence in writing of Books, these two are none of the least. First, A difficulty of having pure and right intentions therein, even the Glory of God, and the Edification of others. For as in Preaching, so in Printing; Pride, Vain-glory, and Self-ends are apt to creep in, whereby there is a temptation to accumulate those things, which may be for ostentation, more than utility. And Euge Bernarde, benè scribis, may importunately presse it self into the heart, as*



---

## To the Reader.

---

well as benè dicis. Inſomuch that we are to looke upon the time, wherein we are preparing any thing for the publick view, as the hour of temptation, earnestly praying unto God for humility, mortification, and a publick frame of heart. For as Gregory once ſaid, *Tutius auditur veritas, quam prædicatur*, The Auditor is in more ſafety, while hearing, than the Preacher, while ſpeaking, becauſe of the vain motions which are ready then to ariſe in the heart; ſo is the Reader in leſſe temptation than the Authour of the Book. A ſecond cauſe of ſuch exact watchfulneſſe, is the difficulty of working thoſe Truths in a ſavoury experimental power, upon our own hearts, which we communicate to others; whereby we may fear leaſt while we write for others, we our ſelves be *adversarij*, unapproved. *Quid tibi proderit lingua aurea, ſi cor ferreum ?* What will a Golden Tongue advantage, if a man have a ſenſleſſe heart at that time? This then is a cauſe of godly trembling, *Ne illæ literæ vicariæ oris noſtri, in die judicii, adverſus nos proferantur*, as Tertullian ſaid; Leſt our writings witneſſe againſt us, as publiſhing thoſe things, the experimental power whereof we never felt upon our hearts. Such conſiderations as theſe may be apt to deterre from writing. For as for thoſe ordinary and cuſtomary Apologies againſt the ſevere Momuſſes, and ſharpe Ariſtarchuſſes of the world, they



---

## To the Reader.

---

they are comparatively contemptible. But yet though there be these Lyons in the way, we are not through selfishness to hide our talent in a napkin, but where Opportunity offereth it selfe, there to embrace it, <sup>and to improve it</sup> for the edification of others. And I know no way so conducible to the spiritual advantage of others, as the Interpretation and Explication of the holy Scriptures. Its a pleasant and profitable work to be digging gold out of this mine, to adorne the Temple of God; to be cutting down timber out of this wood, for Gods house; to be plucking off the leaves and fruit of this tree of life, which are both medicinal and alimential. The Scripture is medicum myropolium, an Apothecaries-shop, whereby all the spiritual diseases of the soul may be cured. Its Bellicum armamentarium, a Magazine of warre, by which all errours and heresies are to be destroyed. It is augustissimum sacrarium, a most august treasury of all spiritual good things. How much better then is it to be gathering honey bere, than to sting in polemical Controversies? To keep the sweetnesse and the fatnesse we may enjoy here, than to be torne by these brambles. Now among other parts of the Scripture, I have taken the second Epistle of the Corinthians to comment upon, and practically improve,  
not



---

## To the Reader.

---

*not onely because of the universal concernment of that excellent matter contained therein, but also because there are few, who have selected that Epistle on purpose to treat upon. So that whereas there are many Books of the Scripture particularly expounded, and illustrated by several learned Authours, yet this hath been past by. Yea when the former Epistle hath had its Commentators, as Martyr, Pareus, Morton, yet this hath been pretermitted. As therefore God shall give life and opportunity, I shall endeavour the true and sound Exposition of this Epistle, especially so as to reduce all Doctrinals and controversals to practicals and experimentals, which is the life and soul of all. For to have Books only in our heads, and not in our hearts, doth bring (as Solomon saith) much wearinesse to the flesh; yea sometimes much detriment, as Gerson speaketh of a young man in his Tractate, De simplicatione cordis, who by an indiscreet laboriousnesse in reading Anselm's Meditations, fell into such a bodily distemper, that the very beholding of a Booke, that was written, would afterwards put him into an horroure and vertiginous giddinesse. Thus worldly reading (as I may so call it) causeth death, but spiritual and godly improving of the Books we peruse, will be like oil to the wheels, that the work of grace may succeed more prosperously.*



---

## To the Reader.

---

ſperouſly. I ſhall not trouble thee with an enumeration of what different, and yet profitable matter, is treated on in this firſt Chapter preſented to thy view, that is done to thee by another hand in the Table or Contents; only my requeſt is, that the Errata, which may ſome times be committed, and the rather, becauſe of my diſtance from the Preſſe, may not prejudice the Diſcourſe. And if in ſo long a Worke, ſome things are ſpoken, that required a more diſtinct Explication, and further Illuſtration (as haply upon a Review may appear) caſt this into the account of humane imbecillity. For if even great Pillars of the Church have acknowledged, that they did *Scribendo proficere*; and, *Docere, ut diſcant*; how much more ought *Tantillitas noſtra*, being conſcious of my owne imbecillity? It's a true ſaying of Auſtins, ſpeaking of the imperfections of Readers and Writers, in his *Epistle to Euodius* *Epist. 150.* *Laborant homines in diſcendo, & brevia non valent intelligere, prolixa non amant legere: laborant itidem in docendo, qui & pauca tardis, & multa pigris fruſtra ingerunt.* However, let that which the Apoſtle ſaith to theſe Corinthians, be alſo truly

by



---

**To the Reader.**

---

*ly applicable to us, That these things are not written with ink only, but the Spirit of God; not in Books only, but in the fleshy tables of our heart. So prayeth*

*The affectionate well-wisher*

*of thy Souls good*

**Anthony Burgesse.**

---




## THE CONTENTS.

---

### S E R M. I.

2 COR. I. I. *Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the Church of God, which is at Corinth, with all the Saints which are in all Achaia.*

 Hy our Saviour is called Jesus Christ, and *Saul, Paul*, who of a cruel Persecutor becomes a faithfull Preacher of the Gospel of Christ. Why God of great sinners often maketh most eminent Saints.

### S E R M. II.

Learning an excellent gift of God, though through the corruption of man, 'tis often made an Engine to promote the Kingdom of the Devil, yet by the grace of God 'tis very usefull in his Church.

### S E R M. III.

*Paul's* Name being prefixed to his Epistle, shews it to be of Divine Authority, though of it self not a sufficient argument to prove it. The Penmen were only Instruments, God the principal Authour of the Scriptures, and therefore we should rest satisfied with their style and method, and not question their Authority. How to arme our selves against the Devil, and all Hereticks opposing the Divinity of the Scriptures.

### S E R M. IV.

What an Apostle was. Christ in the building of his Church used extraordinary Officers, but did not follow the Model of the Jewish Government. What were the Properties and Qualifications of an Apostle.

### S E R M. V.

The Divine Call of Church-officers is clearly to be known, and faithfully to be improved. What advantages will follow upon a true Call, both to the Officers themselves, and the People.

### S E R M. VI.

Of the proper and appellative Names of our Saviour, Jesus, and Christ.

(a)

In



---

## THE CONTENTS.

---

In what sense he is Jesus a Saviour, and how Christ the anointed of the Lord.

### S E R M. VII.

Church-officers are appointed by Christ, and all Church-power radically seated in him as King. What Duties follow thence to be practised by Church-officers and People. Some things are highly esteemed in the Church, which are much despised by the world.

### S E R M. VIII.

In what sense *Paul* saith of himself, He was *an Apostle by the will of God*. Shewing likewise how all Church-offices and Priviledges, come meerly from the will and good pleasure of God.

### S E R M. IX.

*Paul's* mentioning of *Timothy*, shews, That the godly, though exalted above others in Office and Gifts, yet are humble towards them.

### S E R M. X.

There is a great deal of difference betwixt the Persons whom God calls, and also in the manner of his calling them. Education under godly Parents not to be rested upon, but our hearts are to be sought into, whether they be really changed, or no.

### S E R M. XI.

How much it concerns Church-officers to agree in matters of Religion. What means may conduce to it. Universities and Nurseries of Religion, of how great use they are to the Church of Christ.

### S E R M. XII.

Of the Name and Nature of a Church.

### S E R M. XIII.

Concerning the efficient, instrumental, formal, and final cause of a Church.

### S E R M. XIV.

Of the Notes and Signes of a true Church.

### S E R M. XV.

Why *Paul* writeth to the Church, not the Churches of *Corinth*. What is implied in the Churches being called the Church of God.

### S E R M. XVI.

Of the City of *Corinth*. God sometimes gathers a Church amongst the most prophane people. A Church, though many ways defiled, may be a Church still, as it was with the *Corinthians*.

### S E R M. XVII.

---

## THE CONTENTS.

---

### S E R M. XVII.

A further Discovery of the truth of this Assertion, that a Church may be a true Church, though much defiled both in Doctrine and Manners.

### S E R M. XVIII.

The Preheminence of the Church of God above all Civil Societies. As likewise concerning *Paul's* writing this second Epistle to the *Corinthians*; how hard a thing it is for Churches to keep within their proper bounds; and what great care Ministers ought to have, to use all means lawfull to promote the Churches, which they have relation to.

### S E R M. XIX.

Of the Name and Nature of a Church-Saint.

### S E R M. XX.

External Holiness is not enough to bring us to Heaven, without the inward renovation of the Heart.

### S E R M. XXI.

Wherefore 'tis a Christians Duty to joyn himself to Church-society; and in what cases he may be excused. What are the false grounds why some neglect this Duty. The soul of the poorest Saint is to be regarded, as well as of the richest.

### S E R M. XXII.

2 Cor. I. 2. *Grace be to you, and Peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

How Grace and Peace, and such like spiritual Mercies and Priviledges, are to be desired before any temporal Mercies whatsoever.

### S E R M. XXIII.

Of the Name, Nature and Preheminence of the Grace of God above all other things.

### S E R M. XXIV.

Who are fit subjects to partake of the Grace of God. As likewise Rules and Scripture-characters of the Grace of God, by which we may rightly understand, and judge of it.

### S E R M. XXV.

Of the Nature of true Gospel-peace, and wherein it chiefly consisteth.

### S E R M. XXVI.

A further Discovery of the Nature of true Gospel-peace, with the Effects of it; and some Directions how to attain it.



---

## THE CONTENTS.

---

### S E R M. XXVII.

Of the Names of God; 'tis he alone who can give Grace and Peace to his People. He is a Father to all Believers, even the weakest as well as the strongest.

### S E R M. XXVIII.

Of the Dominion and Lordship of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

### S E R M. XXIX.

2 Cor. 1. 3. *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.*

Of the Duty of Thankfulness, Blessing and Praising God for all his Mercies.

### S E R M. XXX.

Of Praising God, and that for all, but especially for spiritual Mercies.

### S E R M. XXXI.

How Christ is the Sonne of God: and how the consideration thereof is the foundation of all a Christians comfort.

### S E R M. XXXII.

How God is a mercifull Father, the Father of all mercies to his children.

### S E R M. XXXIII.

Of the multitude, variety, properties and objects of Gods mercies.

### S E R M. XXXIV.

How God is the God of comfort, yea of all comfort and consolations to all those that are his.

### S E R M. XXXV.

Some Propositions clearing the Doctrine of Gods mercy, from both Doctrinal and Practical Objections.

### S E R M. XXXVI.

2 Cor. 1. 4. *Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we our selves are comforted of God.*

That God not only can, but doth actually comfort his People, and how he doth it.

### S E R M. XXXVII.

That Believers only are the Subjects of the comforts and consolations of God.

S E R M.

---

## THE CONTENTS.

---

### SERM. XXXVIII.

How God will comfort his People in all both their spiritual and temporal Afflictions, which all the Art of Philosophy can never do.

### SERM. XXXIX.

What are these Apples which Christ refresheth his Spouse with? Or what are those Scripture-grounds of comfort, which support the hearts of Gods children under all their afflictions.

### SERM. XL.

How God may be said to comfort his children in all their tribulations, though many of them may live very disconsolate.

### SERM. XLI.

The works of Gods Spirit upon his People, are not only for their good, but likewise for the advantage of others.

### SERM. XLII.

That those only can make fit applications of spiritual things to others, who have an Experimental knowledge of them in their own souls.

### SERM. XLIII.

It is a special Duty incumbent upon every one both Minister and Christian, to apply comforts to the Afflicted in a right manner.

### SERM. XLIV.

That the same grounds of comfort, which revive the hearts of one godly man, may do the same likewise to another.

### SERM. XLV.

2 Cor. I. 5. *For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth by Christ.*

The true and unfeigned owning of Christ, is alwayes accompanied with some, sometimes with great Afflictions.

### SERM. XLVI.

The same Doctrine prosecuted, shewing the Object for which Christians are to suffer, if they would suffer for Christ.

### SERM. XLVII.

What Qualifications they must be endowed with, who suffer in a right manner for Christ.

### SERM. XLVIII.

How many wayes, and by what means Christ comforteth those who suffer for him.

### SERM. XLIX.



---

## THE CONTENTS.

---

### S E R M. XLIX.

How and why God alwayes proportions a Saints comforts to his sufferings, and often makes them to overflow. And why he often denies comforts to his People in their troubles.

### S E R M. L.

2 Cor. 1. 6. *And whether we be afflicted; it is for your consolation, and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring the same sufferings, which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.*

The Saints sufferings are for the Churches good.

### S E R M. LI.

The Afflictions which others suffer for Christ, make much for our comfort and salvation.

### S E R M. LII.

How salvation is promoted and advanced by our sufferings for Christ.

### S E R M. LIII.

Afflictions not in themselves, but as improved by patience, conduce to our salvation. What goes to the producing of patience.

### S E R M. LIV.

Motives exciting us to a patient submission unto God under all the Afflictions he layes upon us.

### S E R M. LV.

All the Dispensations of God carry on and further the salvation of his people.

### S E R M. LVI.

2 Cor. 1. 7. *And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.*

Of Paul's hope and perswasion of the *Corinthians*, with the Reasons and Grounds of it.

### S E R M. LVII.

Of our partaking with others in their suffering for Christ, and how this is a way to interest our selves in the joy and glory which such sufferers enjoy.

### S E R M. LVIII.

---

## THE CONTENTS.

---

### S E R M. LVIII.

2 Cor. I. 8. *For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we are pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life.*

How usefull it is to the children of God, to know the Afflictions which the Saints suffer for Christs sake. And why the preaching concerning the Saints afflictions, even from *Heathens*, is necessary to Christians, though for the present they be in peace and quietness.

### S E R M. LIX.

The Ministers of the Gospel finde much opposition from the carnal and worldly Professors. Who are these carnal and worldly Professors.

### S E R M. LX.

A further Discovery of such, who take up Religion meerly from carnal motives and worldly respects.

### S E R M. LXI.

Of the different judgment that Faith and Flesh passe upon Afflictions.

### S E R M. LXII.

How the voice of the Spirit, and the voice of the Flesh differ in Afflictions. And why it is necessary a man should know them asunder.

### S E R M. LXIII.

What is to be understood by *Paul's* being pressed above measure: as likewise, how neither natural, nor moral strength can carry us through troubles in a gracious manner.

### S E R M. LXIV.

The natural fear of Death is not taken away by Graces. What are the Uses of it.

### S E R M. LXV.

Of the natural and sinfull fear of Death. How to discern between them; and from whence the sinfulness of that fear proceedeth.

### S E R M. LXVI.

2 Cor. I. 9. *But we had the sentence of death in our selves, that we should not trust in our selves, but in God which raiseth the dead.*

The truly godly may sometimes passe false sentences upon their own



---

## THE CONTENTS.

---

own Persons and Actions, and Gods Dispensations towards them.

### SERM. LXVII.

The People of God often passe false judgement upon the Dispensations of God towards them. The Reasons from whence the false judgement proceeds ; with Rules to prevent it.

### SERM. LXVIII.

Of humane and divine Trust, and of the true and proper Objects of our confidence.

### SERM. LXIX.

What are those secret and inward objects, that men are apt to place their confidence in ; and wherein even the Saints themselves may be guilty of that sinne.

### SERM. LXX.

Whether *Paul* speaketh these words in his own person : and wherein the sinfulness of Self-confidence appears.

### SERM. LXXI.

Of the Nature, Object and Matter of our Divine Trust, or Dependence upon God.

### SERM. LXXII.

What is required in our trusting in God, *ex parte subjecti*. And of the excellency of this grace.

### SERM. LXXIII.

Of the Expression, *God who raiseth the dead*, how it is to be understood, and what it implies.

### SERM. LXXIV.

2 Cor. I. 10. *Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver : in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.*

We are not to consider Gods Mercies in general only, but their several aggravations also.

### SERM. LXXV.

Privative and preventing Mercies are to be accounted of, as Positive.

### SERM. LXXVI.

Of the Necessity of Gods continuing his Mercies to us, as well as his conferring Mercies upon us.

### SERM. LXXVII.

Former Experience should be a sufficient Argument for future confidence.

### SERM. LXXVIII.

## THE CONTENTS.

### S E R M. LXXVIII.

Of Motives to trust in God, and the Opposites to it, Presumption and Despair.

### S E R M. LXXIX.

2 Cor. I. II. *You also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by many, on our behalf.*

How we are to rely upon God, and yet make use of requisite means too.

### S E R M. LXXX.

The highest in gifts and graces, should desire the prayers of the meanest. And People ought to pray for their Ministers, as well as Ministers for their People.

### S E R M. LXXXI.

How, and why we should praise God for all his mercies vouchsafed to us.

### S E R M. LXXXII.

God is the fountain of all our mercies, they are his gifts, and why.

### S E R M. LXXXIII.

Of the Necessity and Usefulness of publick Ordinances; and of the Churches Interest in its Ministers mercies.

### S E R M. LXXXIV.

2 Cor. I. 12. *For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards.*

### S E R M. LXXXV.

What is required to a good and well-ordered conscience.

### S E R M. LXXXVI.

Further Discoveries of what is required to a well-regulated conscience, with Distinctions concerning it.

### S E R M. LXXXVII.

A Believer may be assured of the uprightness of his heart in the performance of Duties. What is required to such an Assurance.

### S E R M. LXXXVIII.

Of the Impediments which keep us from Assurance; commands for it, and Cautions about it.



---

## THE CONTENTS.

---

### SERM. LXXXIX.

Of the true Nature of godly Simplicity and singleness of Heart,

### SERM. XC.

A further Discovery of the true Nature of godly Simplicity both towards God and man.

### SERM. XCI.

Of the true Nature of godly Sincerity.

### SERM. XCII.

A further Discovery of the Nature and Effects of godly Sincerity.

### SERM. XCIII.

Of fleshly Wisdom, with some Principles of it.

### SERM. XCIV.

Principles of fleshly Wisdom used in the Propagation of the Gospel.

### SERM. XCV.

Of the grace of God which *Paul* exalteth above fleshly Wisdom, and ascribeth all unto.

### SERM. XCVI.

Wherein the grace of God appeared towards *Paul* in his Ministerial Labours.

### SERM. XCVII.

Of a good and godly conversation in the world.

### SERM. XCVIII.

Of Gods Presence with the Ministry, how it renders the People inexcusable.

### SERM. XCIX.

2 Cor. I. 13. *For we write no other things unto you, then what you read or acknowledge, and I trust that you shall acknowledge even to the end.*

Of the convincing Nature of Godliness in Ministers and private Christians.

### SERM. C.

'Tis Perseverance that is the crown of Holiness.

### SERM. CI.

2 Cor. I. 14. *As also you have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing*

## THE CONTENTS.

*rejoycing, even as ye also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

Of the mutability and changeableness there is in the Affections of the best Churches, to their spiritual Guides and Officers.

### S E R M. CII

Of the mutual rejoycing which ought to be betwixt Minister and people.

### S E R M. CIII.

Of the Rejoycing a faithfull Minister hath in an obedient people.

### S E R M. CIV.

Of the great changes that will be in the Day of Christs coming.

### S E R M. CV.

A further Discovery of the great changes that will be wrought at the Day of Christs second coming.

### S E R M. CVI.

2 Cor. I. 15. *And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that you might have a second benefit.*

Of the Encouragements a Minister hath from the hopes of doing good to a people.

### S E R M. CVII.

Of the Necessity of a constant Ministry, not only for the constituting, but to an establishing the Church.

### S E R M. CVIII.

2 Cor. I. 16. *And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judea.*

All Christians, especially Ministers, ought to lay out themselves wholly for Gods glory, and others good.

### S E R M. CIX.

Of the Office of Apostles, and particular Pastours; and of the Peoples esteem of their Minister.

### S E R M. CX.

2 Cor. I. 17. *When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yea, yea, Nay, nay?*



---

## THE CONTENTS.

---

Of the sinfulness of Levity and unconstancy in the children of God.

S E R M. CXI.

Of the sinfulness of Inconstancy, and lightness in matters of Religion.

S E R M. CXII.

Of walking according to the flesh.

S E R M. CXIII.

Of Principles in general, and a godly mans in particular.

S E R M. CXIV.

Of the kinds and sinfulness of Lying.

S E R M. CXV.

2 Cor. I. 18. *But as God is true, our word towards you was not yea and nay.*

G O D is True.

S E R M. CXVI.

The personal failings of Ministers are oft cast upon the Ministry it self.

S E R M. CXVII.

Of changing in matters of Religion.

S E R M. CXVIII.

A further Discovery of the sinfulness and reproach of Inconstancy, especially in a Minister.

S E R M. CXIX.

2 Cor. I. 19. *For the Sonne of God Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me, and Sylvanus, and Timotheus, was not Tea, and Nay, but in him was Tea.*

Christ the Alpha and Omega of all Preaching.

S E R M. CXX.

Our Lord Christ is the Sonne of G O D.

S E R M. CXXI.

Christ is Jesus, a Saviour to his People.

S E R M. CXXII.

---

## THE CONTENTS.

---

S E R M. CXXII.

Of Assistants required in the Ministry : false charges laid against it ; and the happy Agreement of it.

S E R M. CXXIII.

The truths of Christ, and the Ministers of it, are alwayes the same.

S E R M. CXXIV.

2 Cor. I. 20. *For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us.*

Of Gods Promises to man.

S E R M. CXXV.

A further Discovery of the Nature and Sorts of Gods Promises.

S E R M. CXXVI.

How all the Promises are confirmed in Christ.

S E R M. CXXVII.

Of the usefullnesse and unchangeablenesse of the Promises of God.

S E R M. CXXVIII.

The Promises give glory to God, both as they are made by him, and believed by us.

S E R M. CXXIX.

2 Cor. I. 21. *Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God.*

Our Settlement and Establishment in the faith of the Promises, is the gracious work of God alone.

S E R M. CXXX.

Of Gods confirmation of us upon his Promises, by his own grace.

S E R M. CXXXI.

The most eminent for Godlinesse need to be established by God, as well as the meanest, which Establishment is in Christ Je us.

S E R M. CXXXII.

Of the Spiritual Anointing which Believers receive from God.

S E R M. CXXXIII.



---

## THE CONTENTS.

---

### SERM. CXXXIII.

2 Cor. 1. 22. *Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*

Gods People are his sealed ones.

### SERM. CXXXIV.

Of Gods Spirit Sealing his People.

### SERM. CXXXV.

A further Discovery of the Spirits sealing the People of God.

### SERM. CXXXVI.

Of the Object, Manner and End of the Spirits sealing.

### SERM. CXXXVII.

Whether all the People of God are his Sealed ones.

### SERM. CXXXVIII.

Of Grace, as it is the Earnest of Eternal Glory.

### SERM. CXXXIX.

What is implied in Gods giving us the Earnest of his Spirit.

### SERM. CXL.

2 Cor. 1. 23. *Moreover, I call God to record upon my soul, that to spare you, I came not as yet to Corinth.*

Of Swearing.

### SERM. CXLI.

Of Oaths and several Expressions used in Swearing.

### SERM. CXLII.

It is lawfull in some cases to swear; how and when it is thus lawfull.

### SERM. CXLIII.

Ordinary Swearing reprov'd and put to silence.

### SERM. CXLIV.

Of the holy Prudence that Ministerial Power is to be managed with.

### SERM. CXLV.

---

## THE CONTENTS.

---

### SERM. CXLV.

2 Cor. I. 24. *Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joys for by faith ye stand.*

Of Ministers power over the People.

### SERM. CXLVI.

The Comforting of the Afflicted, one great part of a Ministers work.

### SERM. CXLVII.

God only the Lord of our Christian Faith.





## To the Reader.

COURTEOUS READER,



He Authours habitation being farre distant from the Presse, he could not have the correction of it, and therefore some mistakes have passed, which are to be corrected thus.

### ERRATA.

P. Ag. 58. lin. 7. dele ( hatred of sinne. ) p. 85. l. 25. for of, r. if. for beginnings, r. endings. p. 89. l. 8. dele never such. p. 176. l. 27. for ministerial, r. immaterial. p. 203. l. 8. for Hostia, r. Austin. p. 385. l. 11. dele not. p. 554. l. 27. adde to my observation. p. 610. l. 29. for left, r. kept. p. 775. l. 25. for alienate, r. alleviate. p. 638. l. 14. for afflict, r. affect.

The Reader is also desired to take notice, that the Contents, marginal Notes and Table, were gathered by another hand, and not the Authours, wherein if there be any errour at any time committed, candidly to passe it by.

Abel Roper.



AN  
**EXPOSITION**  
WITH  
Practical Observations  
UPON THE  
First Chapter of the 2<sup>d</sup> Epistle of Paul  
TO THE  
**CORINTHIANS.**

SERM, I.

*Why our Saviour is called Jesus Christ, and Saul, Paul, who of a cruel Persecutor becomes a faithful Preacher of the Gospel of Christ. Why God of great sinners often maketh most eminent Saints.*

2 COR. I. 1.

*Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the Church of God, which is at Corinth, with all the Saints which are in all Achaia.*



IN this Chapter is considerable, the Preface, and the main Substantial Matter treated of.

In the Preface we may take notice of the Inscription, and the Salutation.

In the Inscription are these parts:

I. The Efficient instrumental Cause of the Epistle, described by his Name; and by his Office. His name Paul: His Office an Apostle.

This is further amplified:

I. From the Author of his Office, Jesus Christ, Jesus, because of the Beneficium

The Division of the Chapter, and of the Verse.

Why our Saviour called Jesus Christ,



*nescium* conveyed to us by him; *Christ*, because of the *Officium* undertaken by him.

2. From the *Manner* how, or *impulsive Cause*; *By the will of God*.

In the *Inscription* there is also mention of a Companion or Person, conjoyned with *Paul*, not to dictate this Epistle, but as an approver of it, who is described from his name, *Timothy*; and from his relation, a *Brother*.

In the next place, we have the *Subject* to whom this Epistle is directed, and that is either more special, the *Church of God*, described by its local situation (at *Corinth*.) Or else more generally, with the place where they live, *All the Saints which are in all Achaia*.

The Verse divided into these parts, will afford several Observations. And

Why this Apostle called *Paul*, who sometimes was called *Saul*.

1. Let us consider the *Author instrumental* (for the *Spirit of God* is the *principal*) described by his name *Paul*; and in that briefly consider his *Name*, and his *Person* what he was. His name is *Paul*, so constantly in his Epistles; but in the History of his life in the *Acts of the Apostles*, he was constantly called *Saul*, till Chap. 13. In the Greek Σαυλ and sometimes Σαυλός. Now concerning his name, the conjectures of learned men are divers. *Beza* thinketh *Saul* and *Paul* to be the same name with a different dialect. Others say, he had two names, and they are different. *Chrysostom* thinketh *Christ* did in an immediate manner give him this name, thereby making *Paul* his servant in a peculiar manner; *Imposition of names* being a demonstration of dominion. Thus he altered *Abrahams* and *Jacobs* names. Others they say, it was in a humane way he was named *Paul*, either because of the conversion of *Sergius Paulus*, mentioned *Acts* 13. the Proconsul, who out of endeared affection to *Paul*, would have him called by his name; or as *Anstin* thinketh, *Paul* assumed it himself, as signifying one that is little, to shew his modesty, he calling himself the least of all the Apostles. But *Scaligers* conjecture seemeth most probable, That when the *Jews* were brought in subjection to the *Romans*, they had commonly two names, one of their own Nation, and another *Roman*, to ingratiate themselves, and also for more familiar converse; and therefore *Saul* is not called *Paul*, till upon the setting him apart to preach unto the *Gentiles*. But this is not so great a matter, as the consideration of his person, and his life what he was, and by the history of his life, which he himself also makes often mention of; he was a cruel and bloody persecutor of the Church of *Christ*, being mad against the *Saints*, and haling them before the high Priest, never satisfying his wolfish disposition against the sheep of *Christ*: At last he is converted in a miraculous and wonderfull way, and of a persecutor made an eminent Apostle of *Jesus Christ*. So that we may with greater wonder say, Is *Paul* amongst the Apostles? then they did once, Is *Saul* amongst the Prophets? Here is a wolf made a lamb, a vulture become a dove, a Bramble made a Mirtle-tree. This work of *Gods* grace in making such a change upon *Paul*, may justly be esteemed as wonderfull a work, as those miracles that were wrought upon mens bodies, though it were the resurrection from the dead. Observe,

*Pauls* persecution of the Church of *Christ*. His conversion to it.

God of great sinners often maketh most eminent Saints

That God may and doth sometimes take of the greatest sinners, and make them eminent instruments of his glory.

The worst of men sometimes his grace maketh to be the best of men; we need go no further than these very *Corinthians* to whom *Paul* writeth, *Acts* 18. God tells *Paul*, He had much people in that City, and yet of all the places in the world, you would think the preaching of the Gospel would never have done good there; but God even in this wilderness, did make to himself a pleasant garden. *Paul* might have wrote this, *Paul* once the greatest of sinners, to the *Corinthians* the greatest of sinners.

To open this, let us take notice of *Paul* his sinnes, his work of grace, and his serviceableness after his conversion.

For



For his *sins*, how great they were he himself doth aggravate them sufficiently; inasmuch that he saith, he was the *chiefest of all sinners*, 1 Tim. 1. 15. In what sense *Paul* could say this truly is disputed; for it's plain, he was not a greater sinner, than such who sinned the sin against the holy Ghost. Some therefore restrain it to *converted sinners*, as if *Paul* meant, he was the greatest sinner that ever was converted. Others understand it thus, that he was in the number of the greatest one of the chiefest, and that seemeth most genuine. He was a *blasphemer*, a *persecuter*; the *blood*, *sighs* and *groans* of many Christians would witness against him. And although he saith, he did this in *ignorance*, yet that did not excuse him; for he confesseth himself a *blasphemer*, and a *persecuter* for all that: for this *ignorance* was *vincible*, it was *affected* and *wilfull*, he had means to the contrary. Behold then here a worse sinner than *Mary Magdalen*, out of whom seven Devils were cast, for her sinnes were *carnal* and *bodily*, but *Paul's* sinnes were *spiritual*, and seated principally in his *soul*, so that as the *Devils* are *spiritual wickednesses*, thus was *Paul*; and because he was thus corrupted in his spirit, his disease was the more incurable. For, *If the eye be dark, how great is that darkness?* The prophane gross sinner, he is easily convinced, he is presently apprehensive of his evil; but where sinfulness hath possessed the *vital parts* of the soul, the *mind* and the *heart*, what hope can remain for such an one? This made our Saviour say, *The Publicans and Harlots entered the Kingdom of Heaven above the Pharisees*. Now *Paul* he was a *Pharisee*, and most zealous above others for the tradition of his fathers, and therefore thought his wilde zeal to be true love to God. A man then so great a sinner, and yet so *self-confident*, that he had all the disadvantages in the world; yet is converted, and that when he had for some while lived in such a way, being *habituated* and *rooted in it*. For, as some think, he was converted about the thirtieth year of his age.

*Paul's sins great.*

*How the chiefest of sinners.*

2. The *work of grace* was admirable and wonderfull. Twice the *Apostle* himself relateth it, while he was in the way, breathing out threatnings to the Church of God, even in this his wicked posture, *He was stricken to the ground, and a glorious light shone round about him*. That as they say of some lightning, it melteth the sword; while it doth not hurt the scabbard at all: Thus *Paul's body* not being any way hurt in this miraculous Vision; his *soul* was wonderfully melted and changed, inasmuch that he crieth out, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* This instance of *Paul's* conversion is an hammer to beat down the *Arminian Doctrine*: here they labour and sweat to give a clear answer. Some of them confess, that *Paul* was peremptorily elected, and that we are not to judge of mens ordinary conversion, by that which was extraordinary. Indeed we grant, that many things were wonderfull and extraordinary in *Paul's* conversion. It is not for men now to expect such a Vision and voice from Heaven immediately speaking to them; but this we urge, That if God could do thus on *Paul's* heart, *insuperably* and *irresistibly* working on it, making it of *unwilling, willing*, and yet not the natural liberty of *Paul's* will destroyed; then God may still demonstrate the same *efficacy of grace*, and yet man in conversion not be turned into a stock or stone, as they charge the Orthodox. As *Paul* then had been a sinner above measure, so he had also grace exceeding gracious in an overflowing manner to him. Therefore how frequently and joyfully doth *Paul* speak of the *riches of grace*, and Gods unspeakable grace to him, alwayes debasing himself, as the *greatest of sinners*, and the *least of all Saints*, *not worthy to be called an Apostle*, and magnifying grace alwayes running out like the Sea; when he comes to speak of Christ and grace.

*The work of Gods grace wonderfull.*

In the third place, His *serviceableness*, that was as wonderfull, *I laboured more than they*. The Heathens *Hercules* is not comparable to him. To read how much he did, and how much he suffered for Christ, may make us stand amazed,

*Paul's serviceableness admirable.*



yet still he saith, *Not I, but the grace of God*, 1 Cor. 15. 10. Chrysostome doth infinitely expatiate upon all occasions in the praise of *Paul*, but *Paul* himself was like *Moses*, whose face shined gloriously, but he did not know it. And thus *Paul*, though above all others in doing and suffering for Christ, yet accounts of himself as nothing, and gives all to the grace of God; as none preached more than he did, so none wrote more Epistles than he did; he took care of all the Churches. Thus he, who formerly did his utmost to root out the Church of God, is now as zealous and active to establish and propagate it. So that you see three wonderfull things in *Paul*, his sinne, his conversion, and his godly life afterwards.

In the next place, let us consider what Reasons there may be, why God will choose such great sinners out of their high impieties, especially to be *Apostles* and *Officers* in the Church of God, seeing that the Scripture in those qualifications for an Elder, requireth, *That he be without blame, and one of a good report*, 1 Tim. 3. 5. Therefore in the *Apostles*, who were the chief *Officers*, called by the Ancient, *Oculi Dei*, *Sedes Christi*, and *Oculi Ecclesie*, this was much more to be expected. But there are these Reasons may be given.

Reasons why  
God of great  
sinners often  
maketh such  
eminent  
Saints.

1. On Gods  
part.

1. Hereby the  
power of God  
is manifested.

First, *Hereby the power and strength of God is made evident*. If men of civility only, and of ingenuous principles were brought home to Christ, it might be thought something of men did promote our salvation; but when there is a direct and violent opposition in a mans wayes, yet to become converted and obedient, this may make us acknowledge with *Paul*, *The exceeding greatnes of his power to us who believe*, Ephes. 1. 19. And if (setting aside some extraordinary circumstances) there is the same kind of power seen in every mans conversion, that was in *Pauls*; then it's plain, that God doth not onely use *moral suasions*, as *Arminians* would have it, but also *efficacious operations*. So that we may bless God for this president of *Pauls* conversion; we may all by that see, what is done in the heart of every man, when turned to God. We do justly admire the power of God in *Creation*, and in all the wonderfull deliverances the Church hath; but the power of God upon mens hearts, making them to love and delight in those things, which formerly they hated; This may make us to sing *Psalms* in the admiration of Gods great power about the new creation, as well as the old creation of the world.

2. Hereby the  
Wisdom of  
God is clearly  
evidenced.

1. In convert-  
ing *Paul* when  
in the height  
of his impie-  
ties.

Secondly, *As Gods Power is hereby evidenced, so also his Wisdom*; and that in a two-fold respect:

1. *Converting Paul at that very time; when he was in the height of his spirit, adding with the greatest violence against Christ*. This season was most admirable; for hereby it did plainly appear, *That it was not of Paul that willed, or runned, but of Gods good pleasure*. Hence Ephes. 1. *Paul speaking of Gods predestination, doth over and over again resolve all into his good pleasure, and that he doth all things according to the goodnesse of his will*. What then will become of that *vocatio congrua*, so much boasted of by some, as if men were converted, because God did fore-see, that if they were put into such a condition with such circumstances, then they would readily consent to Gods Call? But was *Pauls* conversion accompanied with a *vocatio congrua*? Did God stay till he had a fit bait or snare to catch *Paul* in? Now all was here the clean contrary, *Paul* was never in higher opposition against God; never were the doors of his heart more fastened up with iron-barres than at this time; and then, and never till then doth God convert him. That as it is with Gods Church, he never helps till all things be desperate; therefore he is called, *The God that raiseth the dead*, 2 Cor. 1. and *he that collecteth things that are not, as if they were*. Thus many times it falleth out, when men are more treasuring up their sin, and adding higher degree of opposition, even then God takes off their hearts, and thereby the *Wisdom of God is the more seen*, of such crooked timber



timber to make so excellent a building. To raise up *Lazarus*, when he is not only dead, but buried and resting in the grave, this makes us astonished at Gods Wisdom.

And then in a second respect, Gods Wisdom is seen, *Because such fire-brands pluckt out of the fire, are fittest to kindle a fire in the hearts of others*: When we shall be able to say, Lo, here is a man as prophane, as bitter and cruel a scoffer, and enemy of all godliness, as ever you were: He was one of your company, you took wicked counsel together, you were often drunk or unclean together; and now behold what a change is made upon him! He prayeth, he humbleth himself, he cryeth out of his former conversation; if he had the whole world given him, he would not be such an one as once! Certainly, when God doth thus, it doth wonderfully shame and confound all wicked men. What a conviction was this to all other Pharisees, when it could be said, Behold here *Paul* a Pharisee, one of your own Sect, as desperately cruel and malicious, as any of you! Oh, but behold how he is changed, he builds up that way he once destroyed! Now he counts all those things you dote on so much, but dung and dross in comparison of the knowledge of *Jesus Christ*.

2. Because such fire-brands plucked out of the fire, are the fittest to enkindle a fire in the hearts of others.

3. In converting of such, above all God sheweth the freeness and meer riches of his grace. For what can *Paul* say to justify himself with? Where were merits, and dispositions in *Paul*? At this very time *Paul* might have had a thunderbolt from Heaven fallen upon him, which might have shaken him into Hell: And behold a gracious arm stretched out to save him from thence! And for this cause it is, that none like *Paul* doth to amplify the grace of God, and is so frequently naming of *Jesus Christ*; and therefore it's *Paul*'s whole design in his Epistles, to take off all from works, and any thing in our selves, and to give all to the grace of God. And thus *Austin*, a second *Paul* in some respect, he in his former times had been a great sinner, involved in unclean lusts, and a cursed *Masochite*, but when converted, what *Ancient* did so clearly, fully and pregnantly maintain the true Doctrine of Grace, as he did? He had not only read Books, but his own heart and experience to confirm this truth. Therefore those opinions, that *Paul* was predestinated, because God fore-saw the good works he would do; or that God by a *Scientia media* knew *Paul* would consent to Grace, calling of him, if put into such a condition, and that thereupon God did ordain him to eternal happiness, all these Doctrines, and the like, are meer *Antipodes* to *Paul*'s discourse and expressions in his Epistles.

3. Hereby he shews the freeness of his grace.

Thus you have the Reasons on Gods part; now on mans part, God may therefore take such, rather than others, *Because hereby they may be alwayes kept Dumb in themselves*. Thus *Paul* findeth these old wounds now and then bleeding afresh; he remembers what he hath been to his great sorrow and humiliation; yea hereby a man is preserved from any dangerous fall afterward. *Peter* and *David* after they had been converted unto God, we read of their falls again, breaking their bones, and recovering with bitterness and much difficulty. But concerning *Paul* after his conversion, we never read of any scandal he fell into; yea, he saith, He knew nothing by himself, 1 Cor. 4. viz. in any gross miscarriage, for the old bitterness would never out of his mind.

2. On mans part.  
1. That hereby they may be more humble in themselves.

Lastly, God may do this to provoke all Formalists and civil Justiciaries to a holy jealousy. What shall such as lay wallowing in their mire, that were like the impure Swine, become Sheep to Christ, shall get Crowns of Glory upon their heads, and we who were never like any of such Publicans, with our glistening goodness be thrown into hell?

Lastly, that all Formalists and Justiciaries might be provoked to an holy jealousy.





## SERM. II.

*Learning an excellent gift of God, though through the corruption of man, 'tis often made an Engine to promote the Kingdome of the Devil, yet by the Grace of God 'tis very usefull in his Church.*

2 COR. I. I.

*Paul an Apostle, &c.*

Paul's learning

**W**E have considered *Paul* as a great sinner, yet made an *Apostle*, of dung made a pearl. Let us now take notice of him, as a learned man, and so made use of by God for the *Ministry of the Gospel*. That *Paul* was endowed with much learning, was so evident to *Festus*, that he told him, *Much learning had made him mad*. And the *Lycaonians* called him *Mercury*, Acts 14. He was for a while educated at *Tarsus*, where he was born, and it is recorded by *Strabo*, as *Lapide* citeth him; That the *Tarsenses* were so wholly given to literature, that they did excell *Athens* and *Alexandria*. And that he had perused humane Authors, appeareth in that three times he alledgeth Greek Poets. Now besides this, he went also to *Jerusalem*, and there was brought up at *Gamaliel's* feet, an eminent Doctor amongst the *Jews*. And if there were nothing else but his Epistles he wrote, this would abundantly declare the rare and admirable wisdom he was endowed with. Insomuch that *Chrysostom* 3. *Hom.* upon 1 *Corinth.* speaks of a Dispute between a *Christian* and a *Grecian*; Whether *Paul* was not to be preferred before *Plato*? though *Chrysostom* condemneth the *Christians* argument as ridiculous and absurd. Indeed the *Apostle* speaketh 2 *Cor.* II. 6. *That though he was rude in speech, yet not in knowledge*. Now it's questioned by Interpreters, In what sense *Paul* saith, *He was rude in speech*? *Austin* thought, he said so only by concession, and in the repute of the false *Apostles*, who accounted him so. But *Chrysostom*, and others think, *Paul* speaketh properly, and that he was really so; not but that he was full of learning, only he did not use those affected wayes of humane eloquence, as he speaks in another place. He did not write as a *Demosthenes*, whom *Plato* censured as *μεγαλῆς καὶ ἀσπιδωδῆς*, an hunter of words, and a curious Artificer therein; yet he hath masculine and strong eloquence, such as becomes the divine and admirable matter he propounds. And certainly, to paint a Jewel would take off the proper lustre of it. The more naked and plain divine truths appear, the more lovely they are, and do more immediately insinuate into the heart. And if he said of *Tully's* eloquence, because it's not so affected and fancifull, *That he had made great progresse in Rhetorick, who could delight in his Latine*. We may more truly say, he hath attained to some good sufficiency in *Christ's* school, who seeth more excellency in *Paul's* Epistles, than in all humane Writers. *Paul* therefore



therefore had true and solid wisdom, and was also indowed with acquired abilities in humane learning. So that whereas Christ chose fishermen that were unlearned; here we see him making use of one that was skillfull and learned. So that God can make use of all; and as *Austin* said, *Qui dedit Petrum piscatorem, dedit & Cyprianum Rhetorem*. So that we may observe,

*When men of great learning and parts are chosen by God and sanctified, they become eminently usefull in their place.*

To amplify this Doctrine, consider, That though Christ at first did choose Fishermen, and other illiterate persons, yet that makes nothing at all to that *Anabaptistical* position, That men abiding in their Trades, and destitute of learning, may take upon them to be publick Preachers of the Gospel. For that instance doth rather make wholly against them. For

First, *Though our Saviour called them while illiterate, yet after their call, he took them into his fellowship.* So that they were like a Colledge living together, whereof Christ was the Head and Master, and thus he trained them up with himself for two years before he sent them abroad to preach. And

Secondly, When he enlarged their Commission, before they did execute it, they are commanded to stay at Jerusalem, where they received the holy Ghost in a wonderful manner, and were enabled to speak in all strange tongues, and were also enabled to work miracles for the confirmation of their Doctrine. Now let the Adversaries demonstrate such an extraordinary effusion of Gods Spirit on them, and we shall not envy, if all the Lords people can so prophesie. And

Lastly, As soon as they were called at the very first, they left their trades, they gave themselves to attend upon their work they had undertaken, whereas these plead for the retaining of their Calling still; private Christians then, though they are allowed to improve their gifts in a mutual edifying way, and may (if they will) find matter enough to exercise themselves therein, yet they may not usurp this Authority and Office in the Church, without a lawfull Call thereunto.

2. Learning whether in the arts and tongues, is an excellent qualification in man, and the chiefest of Gods gifts in a common way.

For as Popery like a thick darkness did then cover the face of the whole earth, when all learning was buried, so when there came a Reformation in that kind, the Arts and the Tongues being more generally known, then also began the Reformed Religion to be so eminent. So that if we consider man, as he is rational, learning is his proper and peculiar perfection; and therefore far above wealth, or beauty, or strength, or any natural perfection whatsoever. In the times after the Apostles, when extraordinary things ceased, then they were learned men that God did for the most part raise up in his Church, both to govern the members thereof, and to profligate Heretiques: such were *Tertullian*, *Origen*, *Austin* and *Cyprian*; of whom *Austin* said, *That he came with the Egyptian Spoil out of Egypt, and enriched Israel; by humane learning he did adorne the Church of God.*

3. It cannot be denied, but where learning hath been in any high degree, there through the corruption of man, it hath been sometimes made a weapon against, and an engine to promote the Devils kingdom.

Infomuch that the learned men of the world have done the Devil more service than any other men. For the Devil at first did not use an Asse, or any such dull creature to seduce Eve, but the Serpent, Because he was more subtil than any other

When men of great parts and learning are chosen by God and sanctified, they become eminently usefull in their place  
Christs chusing of illiterate men to be Apostles, makes not for the chusing of such now to be publick preachers.

Obs. 2. Learning an excellent qualification in man, the choicest of Gods gifts in a common way.

Obs. 3. Learning through the corruption of man, often made an engine to promote the Kingdom of the Devil.



other beast upon the earth, Gen. 3.1. Thus still the Devil loveth to appear in Serpents, in wise men, in great learned men, and plausible Scholars, knowing that such are like *Samson*, That can destroy many at one blow. Thus all the *Heathen Philosophers*, they were great enemies unto the wayes of God. Who disputed for their Idolatry, and against the *Christian Religion*, but their *Sophisters*, their learned men? For that word was used in a good sense at first; and the reason is, because man being naturally corrupted, and the wisdom thereof being enmity to God, Rom. 1.8. The more wisdom, and the more abilities a man hath, the greater adversary he is to God; as the stronger or greater the toad is, the more poisonous he is. So that learned men, if not godly, they come out like so many *Goliath's* against the people of God. *Austin* wrote to a learned Heathen, *Ornari à te diabolus querit*, Learned men they adorn the Devils way, and make his Kingdom and Laws to be accepted; and withall it's hard to have this talent of gold, and not to make an Idol of it. It's hard to be learned, and not to be puffed up with it. So that whereas the way of the Gospel, and the Scripture, is in a plain but solid and majestic way, they are apt to deride and contemn it; witness *Austin's* confession of himself, That he loved *Tully's Works*, better than the Bible. And *Hierom* tells us, That he was so addicted to humane learning, that in a vision he was terribly beaten and afflicted, hearing this voice, *Ciceronianns es non Christianus*. So that we grant, That many learned men are kept off from the humble and low way of Christ, they cannot stoop to his yoke, and all because of their learning. But yet

This is not from the nature of learning itself, but from the abuse of it.

4. This is not from the nature of learning it self, it's from the abuse of it.

As the Apostle saith, *Not many noble men, not many rich men hath God called*, 1 Cor 1.26. But this is not, because nobility, or wealth, are in themselves sinne, but because such things do many times become a snare to us. Learning therefore of it self, and in its own nature, hath no such poisonous quality; and therefore it's a most irrational thing to say, That learning can be no more sanctified than sinne. For was it not in *Paul*, who as *Tertullian* expresseth it, *did sanctifie the Poets verses he alledged*? And are not learned men, if Orthodox, and loving of the truth more able to convince the errours of the learned gain-sayers? Have not the eminent Lights in the Church of God, in all ages, been learned men? Was not the *Egyptian* learning sanctified to *Moses*? And now learning is more necessary since the *Apostles* times, then formerly. For in those dayes, they were endowed with miracles, which were a strong demonstration of the infallible Doctrine that was preached, and they could speak in Tongues, and some had the gift of interpretation, and prophesying by immediate workings of Gods Spirit; but none can now pretend to any such thing. What private man could have been able to have read so much as one verse in the Bible, had there not been men learned in the *Original Tongues*, who translated it into our known Language? Neither can those *Ministerial qualifications* which the Apostle requireth in every Elder, *That he be able to teach, to divide the Word of God aright, to be able by sound Doctrine to convince the gain-sayers*, be performed without learning. Yea, Doth not the Apostle *Peter* charge the *wresting of Scripture to their own destruction upon unstable and unlearned men*, 2 Pet. 3. 16.

The assistance of Gods Spirit necessary to an holy and sanctified understanding and interpretation of Scripture.

5. This must also be acknowledged, That all the learning in the world cannot help us to a sanctified and holy understanding of the Scripture, no, not so much as the true interpretation of it without the Spirit of God: and if learned men cannot do it without Gods Spirit, much less unlearned. Therefore we must not oppose learning to grace, or to Gods Spirit. For how many have written Comments upon the Bible, that have been very learned men, yet from that sweet flower they



they have turned all to poison, and through the corruption that was in their hearts, have made it a book to vent all their *heretical* and *damnable opinions*? So that there must necessarily be the Spirit of God, besides learning; first, to lead us into all truth. And then secondly, to sanctifie it to our own hearts in an experimental and powerfull manner. For men may be very Orthodox, and yet know nothing of the work of grace upon their own souls.

These things explained concerning a two-fold consideration of *Paul*, as a *sinner*, and as a *learned man*. Let us make some practical Use of it. And

Use 1.

First, We see our duty, when God makes use of such great sinners, not to upbraid and revile them with their former impieties; but rather to admire the wisdom and power of God, not to reproach *Peter* for his Apostasie, or *Paul* for his persecutions, as the *Donatists* did *Austin* for his former miscarriages; but to bleis God that giveth us such real testimonies of his grace. When some *Papists* upbraided *Beza* with his youthfull verses he made, *Isti homines* (saith he) *invident mihi gratiam Dei*, These men envy me the grace of God, as the *elder brother* did the *Prodigals* conversion. It is disputed by *Casuists*, Whether a prophane ungodly Minister formerly, though now truly converted, is to be continued in his Ministry, at least in that place, where he hath lived so scandalously? Some are rigid for the negative; Yea, the *Novatians* of old would not admit any Christian that had grossely sinned, though repenting, to Church-communion. Others are more mollified, and hold such Ministers, truly manifesting their conversion and repentance ought to be received, and that as Ministers again. But the determination of this Case concerning a *particular person*, would be difficult, because *circumstances* may much alter the matter. But in the general, we see Christ appointing *Peter* to feed his sheep, though he had apostatized in so dreadfull a manner. Neither may we runne to that absurd and impious Position of some, who said, the *Apostles* delivered a more perfect way of Discipline, than *Christ* did; because (say they) *Christ* received *Peter* again, and gave him Commission for his *Apostleship* through the whole world. In the Old Testament *David* and *Solomon* are used as Pen-men of the holy Scripture, though polluted once with sinne in a scandalous manner. And here we see *Paul*, though formerly a notorious sinner, and adversary to the Gospel, yet is appointed by God to be a chosen vessel to carry his name. And certainly, the receiving of such after their serious, and publick satisfaction to the Church of God, or to ministerial imploiment may be of great use. For hereby, he will be the more industrious and diligent to reduce other sinners, especially such as he hath been an occasion to lead into sinne. Thus *David* promiseth, *Psal. 51. Then will I teach transgressors thy Law*. And *Christ* bids *Peter*, *When he is converted to confirm his Brethren*. Oh what zeal and holy revenge will seize upon such a mans heart, to make all the world see, that he would now set up the way of *Christ*, as he did once the *Devils* way, especially such as he hath been a means to seduce, and harden in sin, over those he will weep and mourn! How greatly will this lie upon his heart, such it may be will lie damned in Hell, and I have been the cause of it? It may be some are now in Hell, cursing the day that ever I was a *Minister* or *Pastor* to them; because I encouraged, and made their hearts bold and glad in wickedness. Oh then, if such agonies and estuations be in their souls, in what pain and travail will they be to snatch such out of the fire, whom they have been a cause to thrust in!

Use 2.

Doth God sometimes call even great sinners; and that to eminent honour in his Church? Then here we see a notable encouragement even for the most prophane to hearken to these offers of grace. Might not you justly have expected, that God should have made your condition as hopeles, as the *Devil*? Though God would out of pity, have converted some of mankind, yet he might have barred out all such notorious and prophane sinners as thou art.



But oh the goodness of God, that will not have thee to say, *My sins are greater than can be forgiven; I am a viler person than grace ever can, or will convert.* What? May the *Prodigal* sonne not onely be received into favour, but the *Father* will runne and meet him, weep over him, put honour upon him? Why then doth not this kindle a fire in your bowels? Why do you not cry, even me, even me, Lord, the chiefeſt ſinner of many thousands do thou draw to thy own ſelf?

Use 3.

From the ſecond conſideration of *Paul*, be exhorted to pray to God, that he would raiſe up many *Pauls* in his Church, godly and learned Miniſters, that by godlineſſe may ſubdue ſinne, and by learning may conquer hereſies, ſuch as theſe are both *burning* and *ſhining lights*; ſuch as theſe are *Stars* indeed, both for the light they give, and the purity of their converſation. Happy is the Church of God, when ſuch Stars ſhine in her. If we have *godly Miniſters*, and *not learned*, then the ſubtil *Papiſt* and *Heretick*, will be ready to prevail. If we have *learned*, but *not godly*, then all holy order will be neglected, then prophaneneſſe and impiety will liſt up its head; but both together make a bleſſed Church.



### SERM. III.

*Paul's Name being prefixed to his Epistle, ſhews it to be of Divine Authority, though of it ſelf not a ſufficient Argument to prove it. The Penmen were only Instruments, God the principal Author of the Scriptures, and therefore we ſhould reſt ſatisfied with their ſtyle and method, and not queſtion their Authority. How to arm our ſelves againſt the Devil, and all Hereticks oppoſing the Divinity of the Scriptures.*

2 COR. I. 1.

*Paul an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, &c.*

**H**itherto we have conſidered *Paul* under a two-fold reſpect; there remaineth one more obſervable thing from the mentioning of himſelf, which is not to be omitted. For it may be demanded, *Why he prefixeth his name in this Preface?* And the Answer is, That as he expreſſeth his calling of Apoſtleſhip to bring Authority to his perſon; ſo he alſo mentioneth his name to obtain credit ſo what he doth write, that they may be aſſured this is his Epistle, and not ſent to them by any other. For if the *Corinthians* were ignorant of the Authour of it, or that he was not one, who was guided

Why *Paul* prefixed his name to his Epistle.



ded by the *Holy Ghost*, they would not have much regarded it. So that from hence observe,

*Inasmuch that Paul's name is set to this Epistle, it is thereby of Canonical and Divine Authority, and so ought to be received with all faith and obedience.*

Paul's name being prefixed to this Epistle, argues it to be of Divine Authority.

Paul's Epistles were never doubted of, except that to the *Hebrews*, (which is attributed to him) as the Epistle of *James*, the 2<sup>d</sup> of *Peter*, the two last Epistles of *John*, and the *Revelation* have been, but were alwayes received into the *Canon*. Indeed there were the *Elioniti*, (called so, say some, from the *Hebrew* word, because they were *poor*, and *simple in understanding*) These with such succeeding them in many opinions did reject all *Paul's* Epistles, not but that they thought they were made by him, only they rejected his Doctrine, because they thought he was an adversary to the Law, and contrary to *Moses*.

This truth about the *Canonical Authority* of this Book, and the rest in the Bible, is of very great concernment, not only because of the weighty controversies and disputes both of old, and alate herein; but also because of a practical consideration. For though men do generally profess themselves to be *Christians*, and say, They acknowledge the *holy Bible*, as of Divine Authority, yet where is the man almost, that liveth, as if he did believe it to be a true Book? For doth any wicked man, that goeth on in his impenitent wayes, believe the *Word of God* to be true, that condemneth him, that forbids and threatens his wayes, that tels him assuredly, that if it be true, and the Word of God, without reformation, he will be as assuredly damned, as if he were in Hell already? Can a man then believe this to be *Gods Word*, and yet be so desperately mad, as to live in a full contrariety to it? If therefore this very Epistle be received as the Word of God, that it's no *Apocryphal* or *humane Invention*, but *Paul* wrote it, as inspired and directed by the *Holy Ghost*. How can ye, how dare ye reject the counsel and admonitions contained therein, both as you are a *Church*, and as you are *particular* persons?

But to enlarge this Doctrine, consider these things:

First, *That the meer prefixing of a name, though of some holy Authour, is not enough barely of it self, to confirm the Divine Authority of the Scripture.* For although indeed most of the Books both in the *Old* and *New Testament*, have their names prefixed, yet some of them have not, as of *Judges*: So in the *New Testament*, the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, hath not the name of its Authour: But these are few only in respect of those, whose Authours are known. All the *Prophets* begin their *Prophecies* with their Names, and the Authority they have by *God*, that greater faith may be given to what they deliver. If then the *Authour* of some Books be not known, yet if these Books have all those *verities*, and *marks*, which other Books have, for their *Canonical Authority*, then they are to be received as the *Word of God*. Therefore (I say) a *meer Inscription of the Name, without other signs, is not enough*: for there are *false Gospels*, that go under the name of *Thomas* and *Barnabas*; yea, there is a third Epistle said to be of *Paul* to the *Corinthians*: and *Paul's Epistles* to *Seneca*, are mentioned by *Austin* and *Hierom* with some respect, though both *Papists* and *Protestants* reject them as *Apocryphal*. We must therefore besides the Name, consider those other Arguments, which prove the *Divine Authority* of the Scripture, and see whether they be in it, or not. It doth appear that even in *Paul's* time there were some deceivers, who would counterfeit Letters, as if written by *Paul*, and set his Name thereunto, to get the more Authority. This he informeth the *Thessalonians* of, 2 *Thess.* 2. 2. *That they should not be shaken in mind by word or letter, as from him, &c.* You see there were some, that preached the instant approach of *Christs* coming; and they alledged *Paul* for it, *Paul* said so, and

The prefixing of the name of the Author, not a sufficient argument of it self to prove the Divine Authority of any book.



*Paul* wrote so. Hence it is that to prevent such mistakes, he doth so often mention his own hand in writing, *The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand*, 1 Cor. 16. 21. Gal. 6. 11. Col. 4. 18. 2 Thes. 3. 17. Phil. 1. 9. he put his own hand, as well as his own name to his Epistles.

The Pen-men of the Bible only the instruments used by God in an extraordinary way, not the authors of it.

Secondly, Consider that *Paul*, and so all other Pen-men of the holy Scripture, they were not the principal Authours, but instruments used by God, and that not in a general or common way. As when godly men make Sermons, or write Books, but in a peculiar, and extraordinary manner; so that there could not be any mistake or error. This is witnessed by *Paul*, 2 Tim. 3. 16. *All Scripture is given by inspiration. All Scripture* And although the Books of the Old Testament were it may be then only written, yet it holds by proportion, of all that shall afterwards be written. *Peter* also confirmeth this, 2 Pet. 1. 21. *For the Prophesie came not of old time by the will of man, but holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* The whole Word of God then, came not by mens inventions, neither was it any designe in them, to make such a Canon or Rule for men to walk by; but they were inspired by God both in the speaking and writing of it, so that both for matter and words they were infallibly guided. And therefore, though *Chrysostome*, and others, do admit of some repugnancy in the holy Writers of the Bible, in matters of lesse moment; and say, That this makes more to prove the Divine Authority of the Bible, because hereby it doth appear, that they did not all conspire and agree together; yet this is dangerous to hold so. For if they might erre in matters of lesse moment, why not in greater? Besides the Text saith *more*, *All Scripture*, that is, *the whole Scripture in all the parts of it.* So that the Bible it's Gods Book, it comes from him, he hath commanded it as a Rule, in which we must search, and by which we are to order our lives. Oh then, with what reverence and respect should we receive it! There we see the mind of God, the will of God, who would not think that there should be nothing done in the Church of God, but what is according to the Bible, the Doctrine of the Bible, the Worship of the Bible, the good Order of the Bible. Yea, that there should be nothing done in Nations, in Cities, in Towns, in Villages, in Families, but what the Bible commands. For that being the Word of God, all Laws, all humane Authority and Power, are to submit to that. And certainly, this is an infinite mercy, That in all things necessary to salvation, we may know the will of God, what he would have us to do. It's not then *Paul* or *Peter*, but God himself whose Authority you despise, when you will not obey the commands in their writings; for they are but the Pen-men, or rather those that did dictate it; for *Paul* had some others sometimes to write his Epistles, as it's thought, *Tertius* wrote that to the *Romans*. Therefore because he wrote that to the *Galatians with his own hand*, he takes notice of it, Gal. 6. 11. that thereby they might be the more earnest against those false teachers, that would bring in the Ceremonial Rites for Justification; yet though the Holy Ghost did thus inspire and direct the holy Writers thereof, both for matter and words, that doth not hinder, but that it was in a suitable way to their Gifts and Parts; Therefore there is a great difference between the Prophet *Isaiah's* and *Amos's* Prophecies in respect of the style, and so of *Luke* and *John*.

The Scripture being inspired by God, we should rest satisfied in the style and method of it.

Hence thirdly, Seeing the Scripture is thus inspired by God, and the Pen-men were moved by him in the composing of it, this should teach us to rest satisfied in the style and method of it. For the style, because it hath not the florid, and Rhetorical Ornaments, that humane Authours have, therefore some have disdained it. Yea, how many had rather read some quaint English Books, or Poets, or Oratours, rather than that? Oh be ashamed of that



that curiosity and vanity of thine, if thou art not ashamed to believe in a crucified God, in Christ, though born in a manger! Why of such a Scripture that doth in a plain, but majesticall manner relate these things? They say, where mines of Gold are, there groweth little Grass, and few Flowers. Thus where divine and holy matter is, affectation of words, and humane eloquence would be a disparagement to it. The Scripture is in a style full of Efficacy and Majesty suitable to God, who speaks it; and therefore the very Heathen could say, That Moses wrote his History like one that was of God. And for the Method also, that some are Historical, some Propheatical, some Moral; all this is from the Wisdom of God. Therefore it's prophane arguing on Bellarmine's part, who saith, That if God had intended the Bible to be Rule of Matters in Faith, it would have been put into some other mould, like a Catechisme, or some Body of Divinity. But what arrogancy is this, to prescribe to the Spirit of God? And this may satisfie us in that Question made by some, Why Paul did write thus in an Epistolary way? Why, it was by way of Epistles that he wrote, rather than in another manner? For although some give Reasons, as, Because it was the way of the greatest, and most learned to answer to questions propounded by others. Hence we have the *rescripta*, and *responsa prudentium*. Or, because it's a more familiar way, and apter to beget love. Hence Gregory called the whole Bible, *An Epistle sent from the Omnipotent God to Mankind*. Though (I say) these Reasons be given, yet it's best to acquiesce in the Wisdom of God.

Fourthly, Christians should not willingly enter into those Disputes, which are apt to be raised about the Authority of the Bible, and how we come to know they are the Books of God. Austin spake fully to this, when he acknowledged that God had taught him, that such were not to be heard, who would say, *Unde scis hos libros?* &c. How do ye know these Books to be from the Holy Ghost, and that the Authors thereof were guided by him? For this is the first principle of Christianity; We cease to be Christians, if we deny the Authority of them. So that as in all Arts, there are the *prima principia*, which are not to be questioned, and are indemonstrable; So is the Scripture to Christians. They are like the Sunne, that is visible by its own light. And indeed it would be a vain attempt to undertake such a proof to a Christian; seeing nothing can be apprehended of greater Authority with him than the Scripture it self. Therefore the people of God should stop their ears against all such Disputes. For it was the Devils way of old to make Eve question the truth of Gods Word. Yet

The authority of the Scripture not to be questioned or disputed of.

In the fifth place, Because the importunity of Papists and Hereticks, yea and sometimes the Devil himself, who doth assault Gods own children; In this very point it is good to consider these particulars:

First, That we have as great a testimony to believe that the Books of the Scripture were written by those holy men to whom they are ascribed, as we have to believe any works were made by humane Authors. That Plato's works were made by Plato, that Tully's works were made by Tully; thus that Paul's Epistles were made by him: Yea, we have farre greater reason, for there were miracles wrought by most of those, who wrote those Books, which could not but confirm their Authority in writing; whereas Plato and Aristotle, these never wrought any miracles. Now then, if there were no more, this is something, That there is not so much reason to doubt of these Books as made by such men, then of any humane Authour that ever wrote. And as thou hast no doubts there, so neither may any be made here. But

Yet to arm our selves against the Devil, and all Hereticks, 'tis good to consider,

1. That we have as good ground to believe the Scriptures were written by their acknowledged Penmen, as that any humane works were made by their Authors.

In



2. Hence it follows, that we must believe the matter therein to be of God.

In the second place, We must go higher, for this is but an *Humane testimony*, and so only begets an *Humane Faith*. They introduce *Humanity* in stead of *Christianity*, who affirm, We believe that there was such an one as *Jesus of Nazareth*, upon no higher motives, then that there was such an one, as King *Henry the Eighth*. Therefore this principle once granted, as it must be, then it will necessarily follow, *That we must receive the matter therein, as the word of God, and not of man*. For this being their Writings, and they therein declaring, that they are sent of God, and that their Doctrine is of Heaven, it must necessarily follow, That the ultimate motive of our Faith, is that *Divine Revelation*, and *Authority* appearing therein. So that if this be cleared in an humane way, that such men there were once, and they wrote those things; as the *malicious adversaries* who wrote against them do *confess*, then they therein declaring of whom they come, and from whence inabled, we do no longer receive their *works*, as we do humane works, but as the *word of God*. Humane Faith may make way for a Divine Faith; but this Divine Faith cannot be ultimately resolved into it. And if to this

3. Hitherto we are to add the heavenly Doctrine and matter of the Scriptures; as also the consent of all, and martyrdom of many Christians and miracles, testifying the truth of them.

4. To these we are earnestly to beg the assistance of the Spirit of God.

In the next place, you adde, *The wonderfull Doctrine informing us about God, and the way of reconciliation of a sinner with him*; as also the *purity and holiness of the promises, the excellency of the reward promised, and the terrible threatnings denounced*: as also the *fulfilling of predictions* spoken of many years before; the *miracles* wrought to confirm it; the *Universal Consent of all Christians* in those Books, except some doubt for a while about a few, which was afterwards quickly removed; as also the *patient Martyrdom* of many millions to testify this truth. These and other things may abundantly quell all those Disputes and *atheistical reasonings* that may rise in thy heart. But that these may persuade thee, *Thou art earnestly to pray for the Spirit of God, which alone worketh a Divine Faith in us, in and through the Word*, without which though all those Arguments be spread before us, yet we remain *Atheists or Scepticks*.

*Use.* Is this Epistle then of Divine Authority? Is it not so much *Paul*, as *God by Paul*? Take heed then of rejecting any duty, or truth contained therein. Among other passages take notice of that, *2 Cor. 4. 15. He that is in Christ is a new creature; old things are passed away, all things are become new*. If this be received as a Divine Truth, then what will become of you, who yet lie in your *old lusts and sinnes*? Is this Gods Word? Oh tremble then, thou that hast thy old rags upon thee! None is in Christ, but a *new creature*: Is not this place enough to convert the whole Congregation? Do ye need any more to cast off all your former impieties? But how long shall we complain, *who believeth Gods word*?





# SERM. IV.

*What an Apostle was. Christ in the building of his Church used extraordinary Officers, but did not follow the Model of the Jewish Government. What were the Properties and Qualifications of an Apostle.*

2 COR. I. 1.

*Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ, &c.*

**T**He next thing considerable, is *Paul's* description from his Office, and that is, *an Apostle*. He nameth his Office, thereby to be received with Authority. And that they might honour his Calling, it being of great consequence for those who come in the Name of the Lord, to be assured of *their Calling*.

Why *Paul* calls himself an Apostle.

The word *Apostle* is sometimes used more largely for *one that is sent*; and so in an eminent manner is applied to *Christ* himself, *Heb. 3. 1*. Yea, some say, it's used generally for any Messenger; and they instance in *Phil. 2. 25*. where *Epaphroditus* is said to be the *Philippians messenger*, *αποστολος*; and so it seemeth by the Translation, our Translators understood it; but *Salmasius* doth vehemently contend, pleading also the consent of the Ancients, that it's to be understood of an *Apostle*, and that *Paul* never useth the word, but of *eminent and chief Officers* in the Church, so that he is called the *Philippians Apostle*, because he was *a special fellow-labourer with Paul*, in planting of that Church. Therefore he distinguisheth of *Apostles*, making two kinds of them: and indeed the Scripture plainly insinuateth it. The *primary Apostles*, those who were immediately called by *Christ*, being twelve in number. Or *secondary*, and these were sent by the *Apostles*: They were the *Apostles Apostles*. For seeing that many came in at the *Apostles* preaching, insomuch that they were not able to manage all things themselves, they therefore assumed as assistants others, whom they called *Apostles*. Therefore *2 Cor. 11. 5*. and *Chap. 13. 11*. we read of some that are called *εὐχριστοι ἀποστολοι*, the *chiefest Apostles*. So that the name was given to others besides the eminent twelve. And of these *Salmasius* and *Illyricus* understand that place, *Ephes. 4. 11*. where the *Apostle* saith, *God had set in his Church some Apostles*, &c. that is (say they) some choice and eminent Teachers. But *Salmasius* by these *secondary Apostles* seemeth to mean the *Evangelists*, whereas those are distinguished in that enumeration. It's enough, that others were called *Apostles* besides the twelve, and that they were *Coadjutors* with them in the planting and propagating of the Gospel.

What an Apostle was.

Two kinds of Apostles, primary and secondary.

Now the *Apostle Paul*, though he was none of the twelve immediately called by *Christ*, yet because he had such an extraordinary Call afterwards by *Christ*, while glorified in Heaven, which none else had, but he, therefore is justly reckon-

ed



ed with the other, and so accounted as the thirteenth *Apostle*. Thus that which was of such exceeding rich grace, and so extraordinary a privilege to *Paul*, yet he was not puffed up with it; but 1 Cor. 15. 9. makes a new Greek word, *He was less than the least*, and looks upon himself as an abortive, and one born out of due time. Observe

Christ in his first planting of his Church appointed extraordinary Officers, which he called Apostles.

*That Christ in the first planting of the Christian Church, did appoint extraordinary Officers, which he called Apostles.*

That as God in the first plantation of the people of *Israel*, when he brought them out of *Egypt*, and imbodyed them together, did guide them and provide for them in an extraordinary way, which did wholly cease, when they came to be settled in *Canaan*. Thus did the Lord *Christ*, in the beginning of his Church use many extraordinary things, as *Officers* and *Miracles*, which now have no more continuance, though the advantage of these doth still belong to us. For those very miracles, though wrought long since, and those extraordinary Officers are yet of spiritual influence. That Christ did appoint *Apostles*, and how, appeareth in their first Institution of them, *Luke* 6. 13. and *Matth.* 10. 2. and this he did of large bowels, and compassions to those whom he would save; They were sent as so many *Embassadors*, to woe and beseech people in *Christ's* stead to be reconciled with the Father. He did not take a way by immediate inspiration and efficacy upon mens hearts, as he might have done. For he that could cure the dead, though he were distant from them, could also have poured his Spirit upon all flesh, though bodily absent from him, yet he was pleased to use this mediation of man, as being more suitable and fit instruments for to work upon us.

To improve this Doctrine, consider

Our Saviour in the building of his Church, did not follow the Government of the Jewish.

First, That it is observed by learned men, *That our Saviour in the edification and building of the Christian Church, did not follow the Jewish Church Government, which was formerly appointed by God, viz. by an high Priest, and chief Priests with the Levites under them.* Therefore the Officers of *Christ's* Church are not to be called *Priests* or *Levites*, though sometimes the *Ancients* call the *Elders* and *Deacons* so; but that is by allusion onely. For, as was said, our Saviour did not propound that form in the Old Testament to follow: So that all those endeavours which have been used to conforme the *Church of Christ* to the *Jewish* in Government, and Ceremonial Worship; as to have a *Pope*, because an *high Priest*; to have *glorious vestments* in the Worship of God, because the *Priests* had; this is to go contrary to *Christ*. For indeed if our Saviour did follow any thing, it was the *Synagogues* and their *Orders*. Hence learned men shew, That the chief *Ruler* of the *Synagogue*, he had his *Messengers* to go up and down to the several *Synagogues* upon special imployment, and these were called *Thelichin, Apostles*: So they had two sorts of *Elders*, which were made by imposition of hands, and they had *Excommunication* in their *Synagogues*. Yea, some say, both *Baptisme* and the *Lords Supper* were taken as Rites from the *Jews* then in use; for they had such an initiation of all *Profelytes*, and when they took such in, they took in their children also: And so for eating of bread, and drinking of wine. Onely they adde, That when *Christ* took up these, he changed the nature of them: They were *Rites* and *Ceremonies* before, but *Christ* made them *Sacraments*. But let the learned debate these things. This is enough to us, That *Christ* he did as the chief *Head of his Church*, choose some, whom he called *Apostles*, for to beginne and propagate his Church.

The properties of an Apostle.

Therefore in the second place consider, That these *Properties* go to make an



an *Apostle*, so that he could not be an *Apostle*, who had not these *qualifications*. As

First, It was necessary that he should have an immediate Call from Christ. So ye read they all had. Therefore when Judas was fallen from that Office, the other *Apostles* did not presume to choose one in his room by themselves, but they did solemnly call upon God, who by lot gave direction, who should be the man; and then Paul, as you heard, he was immediately called by Christ from Heaven, and therefore often saith, He was not an *Apostle* of men, or by men, but wholly and solely by the will of God. Thus as there were *Prophets* in the Old Testament, and so also some in the New, who were immediately inspired by God; so there were such who also had an immediate Call from God; and it was the consideration of this Call that did so imbolden them, especially against all traducers and false accusers, as appeareth by Paul himself in this Epistle. But now you must know, That though the *Pastors* and *Teachers*, which in after ages have ruled in the Church, had not such an immediate Call from God, but mediate by man, yet even they also are truly appointed of God. Even the ordinary Officers are in Christ's stead, and are to be received as from God, for they have as true a Call, though not as immediate. As Abel Adam's sonne was as truly a man, though in an ordinary way, as Adam, who was immediately made by God. Hence Eph. 4.11. Christ is said to set in his Church *Pastors*, as well as *Apostles*. This is necessarily to be observed, because that we are apt to despise that Office, which hath not an immediate Call.

1. He should have an immediate call from Christ.

Secondly, It was required to the *Apostles* to be the first builders and planters of Churches. Therefore they were called, the salt of the earth, because by them God did wonderfully season the world. They were the light, because the world was in darkness, before they were raised up. So that although Christ himself be properly the foundation, and all Churches are built on him as a Rock, yet the Scripture saith, We are built upon the *Apostles*. Likewise Ephes. 2.20. Jesus Christ being the corner stone. So Revel. 21. 14. The twelve *Apostles*, are the twelve foundations. Hence Divines usually distinguish between *Fundamentum fundans*, and *fundatum*. The *Apostles* they are a foundation, but yet need another foundation, which is the Lord Christ. Besides, it's the Doctrine of the *Apostles*, and not their persons, which the Church is built upon; onely they were next to Christ, the first founders and builders of the Christian Church. Hence we read that Paul had the *Apostleship* for the Gentiles, and Peter for the Jews, Gal. 2.8. And in this sense Cameron hath a singular opinion of that place so much vexed by Interpreters, viz. Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church; he understands it of Peter, and that he was the secondary Rock (Christ being the chiefest) upon which the Jewish Church was built, for by his Ministry they were converted. But this is capable of several Objections.

2. The Apostles were to be the first builders of the Church.

Thirdly, It was requisite to the *Apostles*, that they should be eye-witnesses of what Christ did and suffered, that so their testimony might be the more undoubted. And therefore even the Apostle Paul, though converted after Christ's death and resurrection, yet acknowledgeth, that Christ was seen of him also; but for the other *Apostles*, they were present with Christ: And therefore the Apostle John, 1 Epist. 1. 1. begins his Epistle thus, That which we have seen and felt. This eye-witness, and familiar conversation also with Christ is mentioned, Acts 10. 41. God shewed Christ, not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God even to us, who did both eat and drink with him. And this is that which confirmeth the History, some of them relate, for they were present in the acting of those things they record, and their faithfulness and honesty is abundantly testified otherwise. So that although

3. They should be eye-witnesses of what Christ did and suffered.



we did not see and behold what Christ did, and his miracles with our own eyes, yet those *Apostles* did, who are without all suspicion.

4. They were universal officers.

Fourthly, *The Apostles were universal Officers*; they were not limited or fixed to *particular Churches*: as the Pastors were, but the whole Church of God was their flock; Therefore they are called, *the light of the world*, and *the salt of the earth*, not *Judea* only: And thus the *Apostle* professed, *He had care over all the Churches*; Therefore you see to how many *Churches* he directs his *Epistles*; and although *Paul* makes his *Apostleship* for the *Gentiles*, and *Peter* for the *Jews*; yet that was either by *consent*, or else, though they did principally attend to these, yet they did also declare the *Gospel* to others, as it is plain in *Cornelius* his case, that *Peter* did preach to the *Gentiles*.

5. They were endowed of an infallible spirit.

Fifthly, They were *indowed with the Spirit of God in an infallible manner*; so that while they were on earth, they were a kind of *visible infallible Judges*. Whatsoever person or Churches did resort to them, for the determining of any case of Conscience, they could decide *infallibly*. Therefore the *Apostle*, 1 Cor. 7. though he saith in *the point of marriage*, that *it was he, and not the Lord*; yet that is, he had not express command from the Lord, otherwise he was *infallibly directed in that resolution by the Spirit of God*. And howsoever it be disputed, When this Spirit of infallibility was bestowed on them? As also, Whether they could grow in knowledge, or no? For it is plain at their first mission, they were not freed from *Doctrinal Errors*, as about Christs temporal Kingdom; their doubt of the Resurrection, and ignorance about preaching to the *Jews*. Yet it's most probable the *Apostles* had this bestowed on them in a more large manner at the Pentecost, and *Paul* at his conversion. As for that fault charged on *Peter*, Gal. 1. that he did not; *ἐπιστομῶν*, it was not an error in judgement, but in fact. For although the *Apostles* were preserved from errors, this privilege being for the gathering of Churches at first, yet in respect of practice they might and did erre, thereby needing alwayes forgiveness of sins. Only for *Doctrine* they could not, because on them, that is their *Doctrine*, the Church is said to be built.

6. They were endowed with miraculous gifts.

Sixthly, They were likewise *endowed with miraculous gifts, so that they abounded in all wisdom and knowledge, as also in all tongues*. For God calling them to such an *Universal Office*, he would not fail in bestowing of them those necessary means that did conduce thereunto. Not that it was necessary they should be endowed with the knowledge of the *Mathematicks*, or such other Arts, but with what was conducive to that end. Now *miracles* they were necessary, because they preached that *Doctrine*, which was wholly new to the world, and could not be demonstrated by Reason: therefore *miracles* were required to confirm it.

7. They were the chiefest and highest officers in the Church.

Seventhly, They were *the chiefest and highest Officers in the Church*. They were the *Starres* of the first magnitude, these were next to *Christ* himself, and yet though in so exalted and glorious an Office, there was one *Devil* amongst them, *Judas the Apostate*. So that none have cause to boast in any Church-privileges. Those that are called here *beatissimi* and *sanctissimi* by their Office may be *miserrimi* in hell.

8. They were equal in power and authority.

Eighthly, They were *all equal in respect of Power and Authority*. Our Saviour said equally to them all, *Whose sins ye remit, they shall be remitted*. *Peter* hath no supremacy over the rest. They might differ in gifts, graces, and labour or work for God, and love from Christ, as *John* was beloved above all; but in respect of *Authority* none was superiour to others.

9. They were temporary officers.

Ninthly, They were *temporary Officers, and therefore did cease with the persons*. Even as *Miracles*, so *Apostles* were onely for the first planting of the Church, so that they have no successors in their Office. Hence it's high



high arrogancy for the Pope to call his, the *Apostolical See*.

Tenthly, Though extraordinary Officers, yet they did contain what was inferior. Hence Peter calls himself a fellow elder; and John in his two last Epistles styles himself, the elder, not the Apostle; so that the ordinary Pastors succeed the Apostles in what they had as ordinary, viz. to preach the Word, and dispense the Sacraments.

Lastly, Though thus admirably qualified, yet they did not convert all before them. But many resisted their Doctrine, many grew enemies and opposite to them: Infomuch that all but John were put to violent deaths. It's then no wonder, if ordinary Pastors do not reform a whole Congregation, if they be hated and opposed; for can they expect to be better than the Apostles? Do not then think with your selves, if we had such as the Apostles to preach to us, immediately called of God, and that could confirme their Doctrine by miracles, then we would presently submit; This is but deceit and hypocrisie. And certainly, though the Apostles be taken from us, yet we have their Doctrine. Paul speaketh by his Epistles to us still. We need not with Austin wish to hear Paul preaching.

10. Though they were extraordinary Officers, yet they contained what was inferior under them. Lastly, though they were thus admirably qualified, yet they did not convert all below them.



## SERM. V.

*The Divine Call of Church-Officers is clearly to be knowne, and faithfully to be improved. What advantages will follow upon a true Call, both to the Officers themselves, and the People.*

2 COR. I. I.

*Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ, &c.*

WE have considered Paul under the second adjunct attributed to him, viz. his Apostleship, Paul an Apostle; whereupon we treated on the Office of the Apostles. We proceed to a second Observation. For whereas Paul doth therefore mention his Call to that glorious Office, thereby to be received with greater reverence and authority: as also to encourage himself against those false Apostles, who used their utmost endeavour to bring him into reproach with the Corinthians. We may thence observe this,

*That it is of great consequence both to the Ministers of God, and the people to be fully informed of that Divine Call, which the Officers of the Church have towards them.*

It is of great consequence both to Ministers and people to be informed of the Divine Call of their Church-officers.

That they who preach may be able to say, *We come in the Name of the Lord*



*Lord to you.* It is not we that have obtruded our selves, but God that hath inveited us with this Office over you. And they also who hear, may say, *We esteem of you as the stewards of God; we receive you as Embassadors from the Lord to us.*

Both ancient and modern Writers have much disputed about the Call of Church-officers.

To pursue this, first, Consider that there are many large disputes both in old and later writers about the Call of Church-officers. As the truth it self is subject to many difficulties: So the perverse disputes of men have made it more intricate and intangled; onely this we may observe, That the several parties which are in Religion that hold any *Ministry*, or such an *Office* at all, and that by *Divine Institution* (for some deny such an Institution) they still monopolize and appropriate the Call to themselves; with them onely is the true Church; with them only are the true Officers of the Church. And no doubt that way of Religion, which can say, with them only is the true Call, and the true Church-officers, and the right administration of Ordinances, doth infinitely excell all other waies. For Gods promise and success doth accompany only his own Officers, and his own Ordinances. As the people of God, will not hear a stranger, but flee from him; so neither will God go along with such strangers. It's only to his Apostles and their Successours, that he promiseth to be with to the end of the world. Therefore that Church who can upon just grounds say, that with us are the true Officers, with us are Christs institutions punctually observed; no doubt but with them is Christ present, and with them is the Kingdom of Heaven. This was the great advantage Abijah pleaded in his Remonstrance against Jeroboam, who had devised a new Ministry and a new worship, 2 Chron. 13. 9, 10, 11. Where he pleads, *That in Jerusalem was the true succession of Priests, and there was the charge of God kept, and that therefore God himself was with them.* To have therefore a true Call, is of so great concernment, that all pretend to it. The Papist chargeth the Protestant, That their Ministers have no true Call: The Protestant returneth the same charge to them. The Brownist, he saith, neither Papist nor Protestant have true Calls. Yea and the Protestants themselves, because of their different opinions in Church-Government, have also different opinions about the Call of Church-officers. So that it being of such consequence, no wonder if the Devil keep up this controveesie as much as may be in the Church, especially if he pursue this designe, to make the world believe, That the faithfull Ministers of God have no true Call: for this is to strike at the very root of all. Hence it is also, That in the several ages of the Church there have been false Prophets and false Apostles. Yea our Saviour Mat. 26. saith, *There will be also false Christs*; and the Apostle saith, *The Devil transformeth himself into an angel of light*, 2 Cor. 11. 14. But my intent is not at this time, to dispute the Nature of a Ministers Call, and how you may discern it from false Calls, when you may conclude the Minister you live under hath a true Call. For all this will be more properly handled towards the the end of this Epistle, when the Apostle is compelled to plead his Call against those that questioned it.

It is not enough only to have a true Call, but that Call must be likewise faithfully improving.

In the second place, *It's not enough to plead a Call, and that a true one, unless there be also a faithfull improving of it, unless the Office be executed according to the institution of it.* Paul doth not glory in the meer Title and Office of an Apostleship, but supposeth also his faithfull dispensation of it. Yea he was so carefull herein, that he professeth, *He knew nothing by himself*, viz. of negligent and ill administration in this Office, 1 Cor. 4. 2. Yea he saith, *That he kept his body, lest while he preached to others, he himself should become a reprobate*, 1 Cor. 9. 27. Judas was an Apostle, yet he had little cause to boast in that Office, seeing he was a Devil at the same time. Grant therefore that some may make it clear, that they have a Call from God, yet if they are not faithfull and diligent therein, the greater will be their condemnation



tion be. Suppose the *Pope* could prove (which yet he can never do) that he doth succeed *Peter*, and that in *Universal Jurisdiction*, yet if he did not succeed likewise *Peter* in his Doctrine, in his diligence and life, he were inexcusable: and well did the Painter draw *Peter* with too red a colour, as blushing at the enormities of his Successors. So that two things go to make a compleat Officer in the Church, his *Divine Call*, and his faithfull administration thereof; and this later is necessary, because without diligence therein he cannot expect that promise, and assistance of God, which otherwise would be communicated unto him.

These things premised, let us consider, what are the great practical concerns, which will follow those who have a true Call of God. And

First, For the Officers themselves there are these encouragements:

1. He may justly expect Gods assisting of him with such qualifications of zeal and courage, as are necessary to that work. Thus the Apostle speaking of all the Ministers of the Gospel, saith, *We have not received the spirit of fear, but of power and love, and a sound mind*, 2 Tim. 1. 7. It's God that giveth us such a spirit, where God calleth to an Office; there he giveth suitable assistance. For as it is with the general Call of Christians, because God calleth them to holiness, therefore he furnisheth every one with grace, without which happiness cannot be enjoyed: So it is in peculiar special Offices; if in civil, he gives *Saul* another spirit, and much more in holy functions. Hence he touched *Isaiah's* lips with a coal of fire from the altar. Though *Jeremiah* pleaded he was a child, yet God promised to enable him; And when *Moses* did again and again excuse his inability to the Office God put upon him, *The wrath of God was kindled against him*, Exod. 4. 11. saying, *Who hath made mans mouth? who maketh the dumb, or deaf, &c? Have not I the Lord?* If then God calleth, he can give wisdom, mouth and spirit, such as none shall be able to withstand. Oh then, what a comfortable support is here! When thou art dejected under the thoughts of thy insufficiency and weakness, thinking thou shalt fail under the burden, and prove a reproach to the Office: Yet because God hath called thee, thou mayest imbolden thy self, thou mayest say, Lord, I came not hither of my own will, I am not in this place and Office by my own seeking, but all is of thy will and ordering, and therefore do thou own thy own servant. Though I am weak, thou art not: who is the Father of Spirits, but thou alone? Therefore under all imperfections, do thou runne unto God, who hath set thee in that Office.

What advantages follow upon a true Call.

1. To the Officers themselves  
1. They may expect Gods assistance.

2. As he may expect assistance, so also Protection and Defence in all the dangers they are assaulted with. For it cannot be, but he that is called of God, if he do the work of God zealously and impartially, but he will raise up many enemies, and find great opposition in his work. Now as our Saviour told his Disciples of their danger, *That they should be hated before Rulers, thrown into prisons, and cast out of Synagogues*; yet he bids them, *Take no thought what they should say* (viz. not in a fittfull distrustfull manner) *because at that very time it should be given them, what to speak*, Mark 13. 11. He doth not forbid a lawfull premeditating, but that which is accompanied with slavish, worldly fears, and humane distrust, as if the Spirit of God would not be ready to assist. Doth not *Paul* reckon up the several dangers that he was every day in, insomuch that his safety was every day miraculous? Yet God delivered him out of all. He prayed to be delivered from absurd and unreasonable men; and God heard him. Thus *Jeremiah* likewise, he did undertake a very difficult Province, he was to deal with *Scorpions* and tygers, yet Jer. 1. 17, 18, 19. God bids him, *Not be dismayed*.

2. Gods protection.



at their faces, for he had made him a defended City, an iron pillar, and a brazen wall, &c. They might fight against him, but never prevail. This then is a blessed reviving, when in the midst of all thy assaults, all the troubles thou dost conflict with; this man reproacheth thee, that man revileth thee, thou canst appeal to God, O Lord, Is not all this, because I do the work commanded? Is not all this, because thou hast sent me, and because I am an Embassadour in thy Name? Certainly, if *David* did so severely avenge himself upon the *Ammonites* for the injury done to his *Embassadours*; No lesse will God reward those, who despise those he sends. And therefore it's one of the great wonders in the world, That Christ hath maintained a Ministry in his Church for so many hundred years; when all the malice and policy that could be devised, hath been employed to overthrow it. Yea God hath in most ages, still stirred up some with *admirable zeal and courage* to withstand the *deluge of corruptions* that were in those daies: and though many have been violently put to death, yet some have been wonderfully protected, as *John the Evangelist*, *Athanasius* and *Luther*.

2. Success and fruitfulness in their labours.

3. They may expect wonderfull success and fruitfulness in their labour. For seeing God hath sent them, and they come in his Name, *their labour shall not be in vain*. The Apostles, though few, were made *salt enough to season the whole world*. At one Sermon, *Peter converted three thousand*, Rom. 15. 19. *Paul* tells us, *The Gospel did spread it self by his preaching*; yea some of *Casars* own household became converts. Thus doth the Lord wonderfully cooperate with his own instruments; insomuch that Divines have a Rule, *Qualis vocatio, talis successus*; yet this must be wisely understood: for as in the Scripture many precious godly women went barren, and had the reproach of not bearing children, as *Sarah* and *Hannah*: So many eminent servants of God, though called by him, and owned (as it were) by name, yet have not had such success in converting of souls, as others had. Yea Christ himself did not convert so many as the *Apostles*. *Isa. 49. 2.* Christ speaks notably to this, of this protection by God, yet the little success he had. So that it's the Scriptures complaint of *stretching out the hands in vain all the day long, to a gain-saying people*. Therefore we are to distinguish of people, for they are either such as never had the Word of God preached to them; or such, who though enjoying of it for many years, yet have so universally apostatized, that a *Reformation* is like a new *plantation of the Gospel*. Now to such a people as these, commonly the Word hath been successfull, and multitudes have been caught in the Net of the *Gospel*. Commonly at such seasons there hath been a preparedness made *for the Gospel to run and to be glorified*. Thus you see the *Romans*, *Corinthians*, and many *Heathenish places* were converted from their *Idols to serve the living God*. Thus also among the *Jews*, when *Christ* came as a reformer to that apostate people, he saith, *That the harvest was great, but the labourers were few*, Luk. 10. 2. There were more to be converted, but no instruments to do it; and therefore he bids them, *Pray unto God, to send labourers into his harvest*: As with ground new broken up, there the labourer hath the greater hopes.

The word commonly more successful to those who never had it before.

The word less successful to a people that have lived long under the preaching of it.

But in the second place, *There are a people, that have long lived under the means of grace, and have often resisted the Spirit of God in the Ministry*. Now for the most part there is very little conversion wrought on such. Not but that Gods arm is as strong as ever, and the Word is as powerfull an instrument, and God doth approve of his Officers, only the unworthiness and unprofitableness of the people have deserved, that God should give them up to *spiritual judgements*, and that no Ministry or preaching should ever do them any good. And therefore you see, when *Isaiab* was sent to preach to the people of *Israel*, Chap. 6. it was not to *open their eyes, or soften their hearts*, but the clean contrary, to *shut their eyes, and harden their hearts*. Do not therefore question the *Call* of a Ministry,



Ministry, if the work of conversion be not so general, as might be expected. For consider the people, are they not like the ground the *Apostle* speaks of, *that having often drunk in rain, yet bringing forth nothing but thorns, it is highly to be cursed?* Heb. 6. 7, 8. A terrible place it is, if they had been a people bringing forth herbs fit for use, then God had a blessing for such ground, but because they are only briars and thorns, the end is to *burn*. So that though the Ministry doth not work in a *saving way*, yet it's in a *damning way*; and this discovers the *Call* to be of God, as well as the former, because he punisheth people thus for their unthankfulness and unprofitableness. But

2. The Ministry of God is not onely for *conversion*, but *edification*, and *building up*. If therefore God makes the Word usefull for further *illumination* and *sanctification*, this discovers it to be of God. Hence *Ephes. 4. 13, 14* There is a two-fold use of the Ministry spoken of, One *to perfect and to carry forward to an higher stature in Christ*; and the other, *to prevent errors*, and *to safeguard against all heretical wayes*. Now the edifying and building up of the godly is of great importance. The *Apostles* wrote their *Epistles* chiefly for this end, *to increase that godliness, which was already begun*.

A two-fold Use of the Ministry besides conversion, to increase grace, and prevent error.

Lastly, *The Minister, whose call is of God, and dischargeth it faithfully shall have a great reward from God*. They that turn others from their sins, *shall shine as the stars in the firmament*; The *Apostles* shall sit upon *twelve thrones*; whereas those who runne without a *Call*, and work without a *Commission*, their labour is in vain, and God will ask, *Who hath required these things at their hands?* Yea both they and their Office shall be destroyed; so that in stead of a reward they will meet with severe punishment. Then on the peoples part, it is of great consequence for them to be assured of this, *Let a man esteem of us (1 Cor. 4.) as the stewards of God*. Oh if you receive the Ministers as from God, as having commission from him, with what reverence and obedience will this be? But especially you will take heed of opposing and setting against them, lest ye should be found *fighters against God*.

Lastly, They may expect a greater reward from God.

a. What advantage the people may have by being assured of their Ministers call.

Therefore let the Use of this be of *Conviction*, especially to such, who acknowledge us the true Ministers of the Gospel: You who receive us as your Ministers, and cry out against all those that question their *Call*. Now out of *your own mouths you will be condemned*, if you do not receive their Word, as it is *indeed the word of God, and not of man*. Oh therefore do you discover the experimental work of the Ministry upon your hearts! Let it be said of you, as of these *Corinthians*, *They were his Epistle to be read, and seen of all men*; You are our *walking Sermons*, all may see what we preach by your lives; you are our *Sermons* to be read and seen of all men.

Use.





## SERM. VI.

*Of the proper and appellative Names of our Saviour, Jesus and Christ. In what sense he is Jesus a Saviour, and how Christ the annointed of the Lord.*

2 COR. I. 1.

*Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ, &c.*

**T**He second main particular considerable in this inscription, is the *Efficient Cause* or *Author* of this *Apostolical Office*, he mentioneth, and this is said to be *Jesus Christ*.

These words may be considered, either *absolutely*, as they declare unto us the *Lord Christ*: Or *relatively* and *respectively* to *Paul's Apostleship*. And from both these considerations, profitable matter will afford it self.

In the *absolute* consideration, we may take notice of our *Lord and Saviours Description*.

1. Of his *proper Name*, which yet doth denote his *Office*, *Jesus*.
2. His *appellative Name*, *Christ*. We shall conclude both these at this time. And

Of the proper  
Name of our  
Saviour *Jesus*.

For the first word *Jesus*, *Osiander*, otherwise a learned man, hath a singular opinion, *viz.* That *Jesus* comes from *Jehovah*, only the Hebrew letter *Shin* is interposed, because he is called *Shiloh*, Gen. 49. his conceit being, that as *Christ* himself was compounded of two Natures; so ought his Name to be of two names; the one, *viz.* *Jehovah*, signifying his Divine Nature; and the other *Shiloh* his humane Nature. One Argument he urgeth is from *Phil. 2.* where God is said to *give Christ a Name above all Names*. Now (saith he) the Name *Jesus* was common to many others; therefore he had such a peculiar name, as none ever had. But that is a gross mistake, as if *Name* were there taken for a *Word*, and not for the *Person* or *Office* signified thereby. No less absurd is his notion also, That whereas the word *Jehovah* was ineffable, not pronounceable before (a figment of the Rabbins) by this addition of *v* it is made utterable. To this purpose almost *Castalio* likewise, who makes the word compounded of *Jehovah* and *Ish vir*, as if it were *God-man*; but not only the general consent of all, but the reason that the *Angel* gives of this Name, makes it evident, that *Jesus* is the same with *Joshua*, (for so the Septuagint render that word suitably to a Greek termination) and so comes from *Jashang*, to save; and therefore the *Angel* saith, *He shall be so called, because ~~now~~ he shall save his people from their sinnes*. So that this name is very expressive, *In nomine Jesu totum latet Evangelium*, The whole Gospel lieth in this name of *Jesus*, or a Saviour. The Greek word *σωτηρ* is so comprehensive, that *Tully* saith, The *Latinists* cannot comprehend it in one word, *sosipitator* comes nearest to it.

In



In the Old Testament we read of two very eminent that had this name, and both of them are made *Types of Christ*: *Joshua*, who lead the people of *Israel* into *Canaan*, when *Moses* could not do it: So *Christ* brings us to Heaven, which was impossible to the Law; and *Jehua* the high Priest, mentioned by *Zechary*, who being first accused, because of his despicable garments, was afterwards covered more gloriously: So *Christ* our high Priest, in the time of his Humiliation, was condemned, and of no reputation; but in his Exaltation, was magnified and exalted gloriously. The word thus explained, we observe,

That the Lord Christ is a Jesus, a Saviour to his people.

The Lord Christ is a Jesus, a Saviour to his people.

This truth should be sweeter than the honey or the honey-comb to the lost sinner. Christ hath some names of terror and dread, as when he is called a Lion and a Judge; some again of love and comfort, as this of *Jesus*, which, as *Bernard* saith, is, *In ore mel, in aure melos*, not that the name, or the sound of words is such; and therefore that superstitious custome of bowing at the name of *Jesus*, was not for some hundred of years after Christ, and hath no Scripture institution. But the Office signified by name is to be cordially improved by the believing soul.

Therefore to explain this, Consider

First, That Christ is not a Saviour in any temporal or worldly sense. It's true, God is said to be the Saviour of the whole world, because of his preservation, which extends to all; but Christ is a Saviour, because he saveth his people from their sinnes, *Mat. 1.* It was a corrupt opinion among the Jews, yea the Disciples were leavened with it, That Christ should come, and be a temporal Saviour, as *Joshua* and *Moses* were; but this salvation is wholly spiritual; it's from our sinnes, from the Devils, and condemnation; which as it is the greatest salvation, and none could be a Saviour, in this sense, but Christ: So it ought to be of the greatest esteem with us. Therefore the Gospel is called *euangelion*, it being the most happy and blessed news that can be, for broken and undone sinners to hear of a Saviour. Do not then come to this Saviour for loaves, for outward advantages; but if sick for sinne, and burdened under the load of it, come to this Saviour for ease.

1. Christ is not a Saviour in temporal sense.

Secondly, He is a spiritual Saviour, but not in a Socinian sense, as if he did only save us by example, and giving us a patern of holiness, but not saving us by his blood, as a ranome and atonement made to Gods justice for us. The Scripture is clear, not only to inform us of being our Saviour; but in what manner; and indeed the manner how, viz. by becoming a curse for us, and suffering in our stead, as a Surety, doth wonderfully aggravate the love of Christ, and make it love unspeakable.

2. He is not a spiritual Saviour only by example.

Thirdly, He is not a Saviour in an Huberian sense, as if he did actually save all. For he saith, That as *Adam* did actually condemn all, so Christ did actually save all; that is, put them into a state of salvation, so that if they fall from that, and are condemned, it's a new wilfull transgression of their own: but the Text saith, He shall save his people, not all from their sins.

3. He doth not actually save all.

Fourthly, He is not a Saviour in an Arminian sense, as if he were a Saviour only habitually, aptitudinally, or upon condition. If men did believe in him, and receive him, as a Saviour by impetration, not application; for this is to make the whole fruit of Redemption uncertain, and that he might have been a Saviour, and yet not one saved. But

4. He is not a Saviour only habitually, or upon condition.

Fifthly, He is a Saviour in an efficacious applicatory manner. Those that



he intentionally died for, he will save. This good Shepherd will find out his lost sheep, and not expect till the lost sheep come and find him, which will never be. They are his sheep he layeth down his life for. It's his people he saveth from their sinnes. So that those of whom Christ is a Saviour, he will in time cause by effectual grace, that they shall come home to him, and be made partakers of the glorious benefits that flow from his death.

Thus you see in what sense he is a *Saviour*, take notice of the properties of it.

1. He is a spiritual Saviour.

1. It's a *spiritual salvation*; and therefore carnal and natural men, who feel not themselves spiritually undone, they will never runne after him. The godly soul that complaineth of the guilt of sinne, of the power of sinne, of the remainders of corruption, he it is, that crieth out, Oh let this Saviour come and save me! And he can the more affectionately do it, because he himself was saved and delivered by God, from the cries and agonies he conflicted with. The Apostle aggravateth this for our comfort, *Heb. 5. 7. He made supplications with tears unto him, that was able to save him from death.* And *Heb. 4. 15.* because he was tempted like us, sinne onely excepted; we are therefore exhorted, to come boldly to the throne of grace. And hence some consider that of *Zachary Chap. 9. 9.* where the daughter of Zion is exhorted to rejoyce greatly, because her King cometh, having salvation. (The word being in *Niphal*) they render it *Salvatus*, being first saved himself, and then saving us; howsoever this experience of our infirmities makes him the readier to save us: but to whose heart is this truth welcome save to the *spiritual Christian*?

2. He is the sole Saviour.

2. He is the sole Saviour. *Act. 4. 12.* there is no other Name under heaven by which we can be saved. It's high presumption to adde other Saviours and Mediators to him under any distinction whatsoever, so that we must go to him alone. And truly this is a very hard duty, witness all that *Pharisaical* and *Justiciary-righteousness* which is in the world. How unwilling are men to renounce all their own righteousness, to trust in him alone, to rest upon him only?

3. He is a full and sufficient Saviour.

3. He is a full and sufficient Saviour; there is no defect or fault in him, he cannot say, he hath not salvation enough; yes he hath enough for thee, and every godly man else. Hence he is called *σωτηρ*, and *σωμεν*, by *Simeon*, *Salvation* in the very abstract, as having all the fulness of it in him. Hence he is said to be able to save to the uttermost, *Heb. 7. 25.* Oh let this vanquish all thy fears and dejections, saying, Can Christ save some sinners indeed, but not so hainous a wretch as thou judgest thy self to be?

Use:  
Of Instruction

Use 1. Of Instruction. Judge then your selves to be undone and lost by reason of sinne. Christ saith, *He came to save that which was lost*, *Matth. 18. 11.* As long therefore as thou art full and well in thy self, and doest not come often into Gods presence, saying, Oh I am a lost man! Oh my sinnes have undone me, all the world cannot save me! What shall I do, O Lord Christ, Be a *Jesus*, be a Saviour to me? Till (I say) thou art in these sad agonies, Christ is no Saviour to thee. Shall the Disciples in danger of drowning, *Matth. 8. 25.* cry out, *Lord save us, we perish*? And the *Israelites*, when *Dathan* and his Complices were swallowed up, cry out, *we die, we perish, and are consumed*: How much rather should the sense of our sinnes affect us?

Use 2.  
Exhortation.

Use 2. Of Instruction. Be not discouraged, if truly humbled, though guilty of great sins: Why is he a Saviour, if thou art not lost? If thou hadst no sins, there would be no need of a Saviour.

Of the appellative Name of our Saviour Christ.

The second Description is from his Appellative Name, *Christ*, which is as much as *anointed*, or the *Messias*. The word is used sometimes generally to all the people of God, *Hab. 3. 13.* The whole body of *Israel* is there called *Gods anointed*; and to this sense *Grotius* brings that place, *Heb. 11.* where *Moses* is said to account the reproaches of Christ better than the treasures of *Egypt*.

By



By *annointed*, he understands the *people of Israel*. But that is not so probable. It's more specially attributed to those that are chief amongst the people of God, *Psal.* 105. 15. where God is said to *rebuke Kings for his peoples sake*, saying, *Touch not my annointed, nor do my Prophets no harm*; that is, *Abraham, Isaac*, and others, who were in eminency of esteem with God: He doth not mean Kings there, but his eminent servants. Hence it is also that amongst the *Jews*, their chief Officers, *Kings, Priests*, and sometimes *Prophets* were *annointed*. Now *Christ* because he did excell all these, being the true *Trismegist*, the *King, Priest* and *Prophet*; Therefore he was called the *Messias*, or *annointed one*, *ישועה* in a transcendent manner. Hence from *Daniel*, Chap. 9. 24. The *annointing of the most holy*; he was called the *Messiah*, as it none deserved the name but he.

Now you must know there is a two-fold *annointing*, or a two-fold *Oyl*, which the Scripture speaks of; one *material* and *visible*, which was used in the Old Testament; the other *material* and *invisible*, which is the Spirit of God, with the graces thereof. When therefore *Christ* is called the *annointed*, and God is said to *annoint him*, *Act.* 4. 27. & *Psal.* 45. 7. And also the people of God are said to *have the annointing*, *1 John* 2. 27. Hence *Hierom* said, *Disce Christianum nomen tuum interpretari*. This is wholly to be understood after a *spiritual manner*. For as *Oyl* was in the Old Testament used significatively, to represent the graces of Gods Spirit; hence every thing dedicated to God, was to be *annointed*; to teach us, That no approaches unto God, without sanctification, were acceptable. So in the New Testament, the Spirit of God and his graces, still retain the name of *annointing*. The *Jews* out of extream hatred to *Jesus Christ*, will not call their *Messias*, whom they expect *χριστον* but *ιησουν*. Now *Christ* is therefore the *Messias*, the *annointed one*, that he may be a *Jesus*, without this he could not have been a *Saviour*. Observe,

In what sense *Christ* is said to be *annointed*

*That the Lord Jesus is annointed to be our Saviour.*

Therefore he is called the *Messias*, the *Christ*; and the chief scope of the Evangelists, is to prove, that *Jesus of Nazareth*, then born, was the *Christ*, the *Messias*. For as *Antichrist* must be discovered by having all the peculiar characters, that the Scripture attributes to him: So must *Jesus* be proved to be the true *Christ* by having all the Prophecies and promises fulfilled in him. This title *Christ* doth briefly imply:

The Lord *Jesus* was *annointed* to be our *Saviour*.  
What the title *Christ* implies.

First, *His solemn inauguration and consecration to that Office of a Saviour.*

Secondly, *The full qualifying of him for that worke, both in fitness of Person, and fullnesse of graces.* Therefore, (as you heard) God is said to *annoint him*. And certainly if *Moses* were inabled to bring *Israel* out of *Egypt*, and *Joshua* into *Canaan*, notwithstanding all the oppositions in the way, fear not but *Christ* the *annointed* will bring all his children to Heaven, notwithstanding all contrary power.

Use of *Incouragement* to every believer, *Christ is annointed to be thy Saviour.* Therefore he wants nothing for that Office; and God desireth no more. Though thou art wretched and sinfull, yet thou hast not a weak sinfull *Christ*. Thou mayest now alwayes live in a *Jubilee*. Did the poor *Israelite*, whose Land was mortgaged, and houses sold, trouble himself about money, when that time came? No *Jubilee* was better than money that released all debts; &c. Thus the Lord *Christ* is *annointed* to save thee; *Christ* is better than perfect obedience, than *Adam's* integrity, than freedome from all sinne; *Christ* was *annointed* with the *Oyl* of gladness, let it be *Oyl* of gladness and joy to thee.

Use 1.  
Of encouragement.



Use 2.  
Of Exhortation.

2. Is Christ thus anointed? Then labour to partake of this ointment, 1 Job. 2. 27. What a glorious expression is there of all the godly? *They have an anointing that teacheth them all things, viz. practically, in necessities to salvation.* A man may be a very knowing man, and yet have not this anointing, but *the oyl that was poured on our Aaron, descends on his skirts to all his people, Ps. 45.* God is there said to *anoint Christ above his fellows*, that is, as some expound, above all anointed Kings or Priests; but others render the Preposition *min propter*, for his fellows, viz. all the godly, which are made his brethren. Let then thy life be like that *Alabaster box* of ointment.



## SERM. VII.

*Church-Officers are appointed by Christ, and all Church-power radically seated in him as King. What Duties follow thence to be practised by Church-Officers and People. Some things are highly esteemed in the Church, which are much despised by the world.*

2 COR. I. 1.

*Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, &c.*

**T**HE *Author and Fountain* of Paul's Apostleship hath been considered absolutely, under those two names *Jesus Christ*. We shall now take notice of them *relatively*. For herein doth the name of the Apostle breed reverence and esteem with believers, because *Jesus Christ* himself doth appoint them. So that the *Apostle* doth not make himself the ultimate object, into which their faith and obedience, is to be resolved, but the *Lord Christ*. Insinuating hereby, that if they reject him, they also refuse Christ himself. It is not in his own name that he cometh, neither doth he intrude himself into this Office, but he is sent by Christ, and comes in his Name. Now although, when he is said to be the *Apostle of Jesus Christ*, we may understand it *finaliter*, because his whole work and office was to advance Christ, to exalt him, to study and preach nothing but him, yet it is chiefly to be understood *efficienter*; For his meaning is, he had his Office, and his Power from Christ. Observe,

Christ as Head  
doth appoint  
all the Officers  
of the Church

*That the Lord Christ, as Head of his Church, doth appoint all Officers therein, so that they act and officiate in his Name.*

The Apostle speaks this fully, 2 Cor. 5. 20. *We are ambassadors for Christ, we pray you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God.* What an efficacious Argument is this for your attention and obedience? The Ministry is not an humane inven-



invention; neither do we plead our own interest, or act in our name, but it's Christs interest, we are his *Embassadors*, we come in his Name to you. It is he that giveth us our commission to preach and baptize, insomuch that all the affronts, contempts and rebellions that our Ministry meets with, for it's sake it redounds upon Christ himself; and what is done against us, coming in his name is taken by the Lord Christ, as done against himself; *He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me*, Luk. 10. 16. See how hainous a sinne it is, and how far it reacheth thus to reject those who have Christs commission to watch over a people. It is not for our selves, but for your good, ye should know these things.

But let us consider the Doctrine; and to explain that you must know,

First, *That we learned do from the Scripture find a two-fold Kingdome attributed unto Christ.* The one as he is God, having the same Essence with the Father, and so ruling over the whole world. The other as he is *Mediator*, and *Head of the Church*, and so the chief Governour and Shepherd thereof in a peculiar manner. The first is called his *Essential* and *natural Kingdome*. The second his *Dispensatory* and *Donative*. The *Sacrinians* have occasioned this distinction. For when we bring those places, where Christ is said to be *King*, and *Lord*, to be exalted above all principalities, to prove his eternal *God-head*. They answer, This is a constituted God-head; Christ was not thus King, till after his resurrection; and therefore (say they) it was given him in time, whereas if it were an essential attribute of God, it must be had from all eternity. To this it is answered, That *Christ as God* had right to all that glory and honour, which was given him in time; but then as *Mediator*, so it was a reward, at least a consequent of his obedience and humiliation. So that they grant, Christ did in time receive a *Mediatory Kingdome* and glory, whereby he was made *Head of his Church*, and to rule it with supream power and authority, though from the Father; neither doth this derogate from his Deity, to say it was given him; for it was not given him to make him more perfect, only to perfect his Church, and it's a gift of such a thing, which only can be attributed to God; for none but he that is God can be *Mediator* and *Head of his Church*, because he that is so, must be the cause of all the grace and spiritual benefits which are in the Church.

A two-fold Kingdom attributed to Christ in Scripture.

Secondly, *Christ being thus exalted as Head of the Church, all Church-power is radically and finally seated in him.* So that the power to make Church-officers, doth not arise originally from the people, as (they say) civil power doth, and is therefore called *divine*, *an humane ordinance*, but it cometh from the Lord Christ. Hence *Matth. 28. 18, 19.* when Christ had said, *All power is given me in heaven and earth*, then from this power, he appoints them, to go teach and baptize. Thus in another place he saith, *John 20. 21, 22, 23.* *As my Father hath sent me, so I send you, whosoever sinnes ye remit, &c.* From his Mediatorship ye see, he giveth the Keys of Government to his Officers. This also in a lively manner is affirmed, *Ephes. 4. 10, 11.* where Christs ascension is spoken of, and his glorious exaltation, *That he might fill all things*, that is, appoint all things in his Church, whereupon he enumerateth all Offices, and sheweth that they have all their Commission from Christ, and that both, the ordinary, as well as the extraordinary.

All Church-power radically seated in Christ.

Therefore in the third place, *The Officers in the Church are properly servants to Christ, and receive their power and commission from him.* It's not the Church but Christ, that hath set Officers in his Church. The Church indeed may apply the person to the office, but Christ institutes and applyeth the office to the person. The Church cannot make a Minister in this sense, viz. to institute the office, for then it might appoint

Church-officers are properly servants to Christ.



point other offices, then Christ hath, only it may design the person. For Christ is the fountain of all Church-power, and officers receive their authority from him. It's true, that the Apostle saith to the Church of *Corinth*, *All things are yours*, 2 Cor. 4.5. And in another place, *We are your servants for Jesus sake*; but the meaning thereof is ministerially, their office, and the execution, that was wholly for the Churches edification, not that they had their power from the Church. For who can think that *Paul* had his authority from men, when he disclaimeth it so often, yet he reckoneth himself in the number of those that are servants for their spiritual benefit.

This power of appointing Officers and Laws in the Church, belongeth to Christ as King

Thirdly, Although it be disputed, Whether the power of appointing Officers and Laws in the Church belongeth to *Christ* as a *Prophet*, or a *King*. Some say, as a *Prophet* he doth thus govern his Church, yet *it is more probable that he doth this as a King*: So that Christ as a spiritual King over his people, doth appoint what officers, what Ordinances and Orders he pleaseth: so that you must know that this is part of Christs *Jus regale*, and they come equally from the same fountain, both to appoint an Officer and an Ordinance. The Church can no more appoint a new Office, than it can a new Ordinance, a new Sacrament. This is greatly to be observed, because the Governours in the Church, or the civil Magistrate for politick considerations have instituted new Offices, and many times made the Government of the Church, sutable to that of the Commonwealth, equalizing spiritual Officers with Civil; but this may be no more done, then to appoint a new Ordinance; and the reason is, because both *Offices* and *Ordinances* are for supernatural effects, to convert, to build up in grace. Now none may appoint any thing for such high ends, but those only who are able to accomplish them: Christ only can convert, therefore he only can appoint an Officer, or Ordinance for conversion: Besides, to appoint new Officers, would redound to Christs dishonour, as if he were not either wise, or able enough to appoint all things in the Church necessary to attain salvation, whereas the Apostle preferreth *Christ* above *Moses*, *That he was but as a servant, but Christ as a son in the house*, Heb. 3.

Use.  
Exhortation.  
1. To Church-officers.

*Use of Exhortation*; first, To the *Church-officer*. Doth he come with *Christs* Commission? Doth he appear in his Name? Then let him be sure to improve his Office according to Christs command. If *Paul* be an Apostle of *Jesus Christ*, then his work will be to exalt Christ; *our power*, saith he, *is not for destruction, but edification*, 2 Cor. 13. It's a capital crime for an Embassadour to vary from his Commission, to go contrary to that. This should daily lie upon our hearts, To what end have I this Office from *Christ*? Is it not to labour in his vineyard? Is it not to convert souls? Do not all the names, which Church-officers have, imploy labour, work and diligence? Especially these things they must take heed of:

Church-officers are especially to take heed of,  
1. That they turn not their Office into matter of pride and earthly interest.

1. *That they turn not the Office of Christ into matter of pride, dominion and earthly interest*. Even the Apostle himself said, *Not as having dominion over your faith, but helpers of your joy*, 2 Cor. 1. ult. And the Apostle *Peter* forbids *the lording over Gods heritage*, 1 Pet. 5. 3. This tyranny in the Church by the Officers thereof, hath been a fatal destruction thereunto. When the Sunne hath been in the Eclipse sad alterations must needs follow, say *Astrologers*. As not into pragmatistical domination, so neither may they turn it into earthly and worldly advantages, setting up their own name, their own greatness, or their own worth thereby, which the Apostle often disclaimeth, *But we are to walk, even as Christ himself in his office, who sought not himself, neither did he mind his own will, or his own glory*. And certainly, the higher the Office is, the greater will thy account be, and thy condemnation the heavier. Oh the dreadfull account that is to be made at that day concerning this talent!



2. Of laziness and idleness. For the work is of great consequence, The blood of saints will speak more terribly than the blood of Abels body. How severe was the master in that Parable of our Saviour to him who hid his talent in a napkin? Luke 19. 20. he is called an unprofitable servant, and must be cast into utter darkness.

Use 2. To you that are the people. If we have our Commission from Christ, then take heed how you reject the Word we speak from him. The Apostle makes a comparison between him that refused Moses speaking, and Christ speaking, and saith, How much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy of, Heb. 10. 29. Every Sermon your condemnation will rise higher upon you. Think not that our words will passe away: No, God saith by the Prophet, They shall not return in vain: for if it be not a saving and converting word, it will be an hardning and condemning one. No wonder if our Saviour spake one Parable to this very purpose, and concludeth, Take heed how you hear, Mark 4. 24.

The second thing observable from this relative consideration is, That the Apostle intending to beget awe and esteem in the hearts of those he wrote unto, he mentioneth his Office, and from whom he had it, An Apostle of Jesus Christ. This was a greater glory (saith Chrysostome) then if he had styled himself any temporal Officer in the Civil State. For he doth (saith the same Father) as if one next to the Emperour should write to a certain people, giving himself that title of honour, which was next to the Emperour. Thus doth Paul, The Apostle of Jesus Christ. This could not but astonish and startle all his opposers and enemies, yet if you do consider, with a worldly respect, what Christ himself was, and so any Officer under him, you must judge it the most contemptible and despicable thing that can be, that which a carnal man would have been ashamed to own, for Christ himself was called, The Carpenters sonne, and bred up at Nazareth, a most despicable place, and his outward condition was so low, that he saith, He had not where to lay his head. And as for his Apostles, what repute they had in the world, Paul himself telleth us, when he saith, They were accounted the off-scouring of all things, 1 Cor. 4. 13. Yet see how the Apostle glorieth in this title, as that which might justly awe the consciences of those to whom he wrote. From this observe,

That those things are of high account and respect in the Church of God, which in the world are very despicable and despised.

As, That which is highly esteemed amongst men, is abominable before God, Luk. 18. So that which is abominable and loathsome before men, is highly esteemed with God.

We might instance in many things,

First, Christ who is the Head of the Church, and the chief corner-stone, yet he was rejected by those, who by their Office was builders: Yea, Christ crucified was accounted foolishness to the Gentiles. Insomuch that had not God promised Christ, To give him the Nations of the Earth; and had actually lifted him up, above all principalities and powers. We should have thought, there would not have been one City, much lesse one Nation, especially not so many Nations adoring him as God: We may truly say, This is the Lords doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. Christ is called by the Apostle, The King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; which 2 Tim. 5. 16. Drusius saith, was the Title and Style of the great Kings of Persia; but who, except the Christian, would admire Christ more than the Persian King? Therefore it was a wonderfull work upon those Wisemen of the East, that they should come and bring such presents, and worship Christ, though an Infant, whom they found

2. Of Idleness.

Use 2.  
To the people

Why Paul sty-  
leth himself,  
An Apostle of  
Jesus Christ.

Those things  
are highly  
esteemed in  
the Church,  
which are de-  
spised by the  
world: As

1. The person  
of Christ.



found in a mean place at *Bethlehem*, and in the meanest place there; but where God giveth spiritual eyes, there is a spiritual excellency discovered, where the world seeth nothing but contemptibleness.

2. The Officers appointed by him.

Secondly, *For the Officers of Christ*. In worldly considerations, how low and despised are they? But to those who are spiritual, and acknowledge the Order and Institutions of Christ, they esteeme them, as the *Stewards of God*, and the *Ministers of Christ*, insomuch that it's the cause of contemning Religion, when their Office is despised. *Paul* was so received by the *Galatians*, as if he had been an *Angel from Heaven*; Yea, *Christ* himself, *They would have pulled out their eyes to have pleased him*. And we see in the after ages of the Church, how much the Ministers of Christ were had in esteeme, insomuch that it grew unto an excesse. Now though the carnal, worldly man beareth no such respect to them, yet those, who are led by Scripture, doe highly esteeme them, and that for their workes sake.

3. The Duties prescribed by him.

Thirdly, *The Duties prescribed by Christ*, they are such as the world condemneth, either for folly or pusillanimity, as, *Faith in Christ alone for salvation*, *self-denial*, *readiness to take up our Crosse*; *To love our enemies*, *to do good to those that hate us*: Are not these such things that the magnanimous and gallant spirits of the world do disdain?

4. The Privileges of the Gospel.

Fourthly, *The privileges and encouragements, which Christ also inviteth with*, they are not such baits, as will take in the world. *Psal. 4. Who will shew us any good?* that is the vote of the world. As for the light of Gods countenance, justification, and assurance of Gods grace, these things they do no more esteeme than the Swine doth Pearl.

5. The due execution of Church-censures.

Lastly, *The due execution of the Censure of the Church, upon just grounds, to cast out the impenitent sinner*. This the world condemneth, but yet you see how powerfully it wrought upon the *Incestuous person*. And *Matth. 18.* when our Saviour had said, *He that would not leave the Church, must be like a Publican and Heathen*, lest they should despise this, he saith, *Whatsoever ye bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven*.

Use.

*Use of Exhortation.* To admire the power and wisdom of God, who hath kept up Church-officers, Church-ordinances in the world, when there are no outward pompous motives to perswade thereunto.





# SERM. VIII.

In what sense Paul saith of himself, He was an Apostle by the will of God: Shewing likewise how all Church-Offices and Priviledges, come meerly from the will and good pleasure of God.

2 COR. I. I.

Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, &c.

**W**E are now to consider the last particular in this Inscription, as it is divided to us, and that is the *impulsive Cause*, or rather, the *Manner how Paul* obtaineth this *Apostleship*, which is said to be *by the will of God*.

Here is much comprehended in this expression; for hereby is declared, That it was not man, but God that called him; and therefore they should take heed, lest while they set themselves against his Office, they fight against God himself. The will of God *θελημα Θεου* is used sometime for the *Effect* and *Object of his will*, being the same with *θελημα*, *Psal. 40. 8.* and in many other places.

2. For the *θελημα*, the *very act of willing*, *Rom. 9. 15.* And

Lastly, For the *attribute and property in God*, whereby he willeth; but this being the same with his *Essence* is infinite, and so transcendently differing from *mans will*, which is supposed to be a faculty distinct from the soul, and so an accident having also many imperfections accompanying of it, because it is the *will of a finite creature*.

It is not proper in this place to enter upon those great and large Disputes, which are *de voluntate*, or of the *will of God*. Though it might be *operosum*, yet it would not be *opera pretium*, especially in this place, where it is mentioned upon a particular consideration, *viz.* as that whereby *Paul* was made an Apostle. *Paul* doth not here attribute any thing to himself, but all to the *good will of God*; for *θελημα* here is as much as *ευδοκία*, his *beneplacitum*, his *good pleasure*, both approving and procuring *Paul's* Apostleship. From whence observe,

That it is the *meer will and good pleasure of God* that calleth us to any *priviledge or office in his Church*.

As for *Paul's* own particular, he is often affected with this *grace of Apostleship*, as he calsit, which was vouchsafed to him, whereas he had been the chiefest of sinners. And lest it should be thought, that *Paul* indeed might well attribute his Office, and all to Gods grace, because he was so notorious a sinner you may read that *Christ* speaks to all his Apostles, that he alone not for their merits, had ap-

How many wayes the will of God is raken.

It is the meer will and good pleasure of God that calls us to any office or priviledge in the Church.



pointed them to that Office. *Joh. 15. 16. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.*

We have all Church-priviledges from the meer will of God.

Let us illustrate this Doctrine. And

First, Every priviledge we have in the Church of God, we obtain it by the meer will of God. And this must needs be so, for our call to the Church-priviledges, such as Justification, and Adoption, and Salvation, are greater and higher mercies than any peculiar Office never so eminent. If God hath called thee to sanctifying grace in an effectual manner, this is far greater than to be made an *Apostle*. *Judas* was chosen to an *Apostleship*, but not to salvation, and therefore his end was dreadfull.

There is a two-fold Call, the one general, the other particular, both which come from God.

The Scripture speaketh of a *two-fold Call*, That general one, which belongs to all the people of God, who are *his called ones*, and that according to his purpose; and a *special particular Call* to some Office or Relation; and both these are of the will and good pleasure of God. For our effectual Calling as Christians, This is frequently ascribed to be of grace, not by works we have done, *Rom. 9. 15, 16. It's not of him that willeth.* You see, it's not our will, our power, or strength, but of God that willeth. Thus *Jam. 1. 18. Of his own will begat he us.* This consideration then should humble all the godly, as *Paul* saith here, *An Apostle by the will of God*: so mayest thou, a Believer by the will of God, justified by the will of God; it's because God will have it so; my will, my power, nor the will of any man else, could not effect it for me. And this is for the general, as we are called to be believers.

A four-fold distinction concerning the Call of Officers.

1. Some are called only by the will of God, not at all by the will of man.

But then more especially, concerning Gods will, as to particular Relations and Offices, especially in Gods Church. It is good to take notice of that old distinction, which *Hierom* had long since, concerning the Call of Officers in Gods Church. For there are some (saith he) that were called only by the will of God, and of Christ, not at all by the will of man. Thus were the *Apostles*, they were appointed Officers by the meer will and appointment of Christ. And therefore *Gal. 1. 1.* we see in what a special manner *Paul* was an *Apostle by the will of God*; for he saith, *He was neither an Apostle of men, or by men, but of Jesus Christ*; nor of men, that is, he was not chosen by their votes and suffrage; nor by men, that is, he was not as the ordinary Pastors, who though called of God, yet were made so by men, as *Timothy* and *Titus* ordained Elders in every City where they had to do.

2. Some have their call of God, but by men.

2. There are those who have their Call of God, but by men, such as we now mentioned. For though their Call was partly by the will of man, yet not solely. Therefore God is said *1 Cor. 12.* to set these ordinary Officers in the Church, as well as extraordinary. As *Joshua*, though appointed by *Moses* to be chief Magistrate to the people of *Israel*, was as truly of God, as *Moses*, though not so immediately.

3. Some are of men only, not at all of God.

3. There are those who are of men only, but not of God; and they are all such, who by unlawfull and sinfull wayes get into the Ministry, and so have an outward Authority and Office, though they be wholly unworthy, and unfit in themselves. These are indeed by the will of God; but it is a permissive will onely, or by his just anger against an unworthy people.

4. Others have their call neither from God nor men.

Lastly, There are those, who have neither Call from God, or men; that are Preachers neither by the will of God, or of men, but their own self-will. These are intruders, that approve themselves, that judge themselves fit without the advice of others, These run and are not sent.

In the next place, Let us consider how comprehensive this is, when *Paul* saith, *An Apostle by the will of God*, and it is not useles: for every Minister ought to say so, I am a Minister of the Gospel by the will of God; and the people ought to say, Such an one is our Pastour by the will of God. It is God that had a special hand that he should be our Pastor, and we his flock. And

First,



1. *It is more than a meer bare will of permission.* Paul did not mean Gods meer permitting and suffering of him to be so, for thus all the false Apostles, all the false and corrupt Teachers that are, they are by the *will* of God. It was by Gods *will* that any unworthy and corrupt Teachers have ever crept into the Church of God, 1 Cor. 11. *There must be heresies*, God will have it so; but how? It is only his *permissive will*, whereby he suffers sinne to be. It was a custom that some Church-officers had to say, They were so *permissione divina*, by divine permission, as thinking themselves unworthy, only God suffered it to be so. Even as Bernard styled himself *vocatus Abbas*, as if he had only the name, not the reality: but it is well, if this was not proud humility. To be sure as God sometimes suffers evil Governours in Civil Affairs, so he doth also in Church-administrations.

In what sense Paul here saith, *By the will of God.* 1. It is more than his permissive will.

2. *Paul is an Apostle not by Gods just and angry will, raising him up for the sinnes and punishment of a people; but it was from Gods good pleasure.* And this consideration is very terrible; God hath not only a *permissive will*, but a *just ordaining will* of evil and ungodly Officers at some times, to some people, for wise and holy ends, God in great anger doth *will* such Officers and Ministers to a people, that shall be *blind guides*, that shall be *thieves and robbers*, that shall be *ravening wolves*, and shall lead many to *hell with themselves*. Sad and fearful is the condition of such a people. See a notable place for this, 1 King. 22. 22, 23. where God is described as a just Judge sitting upon his Throne, and an host ready to wait on him. Now there was wicked *Ahab*, who desired such prophets that would speak no evil to him, that would flatter him, and thereupon see what God saith to the *lying Spirit*, he bids him *Go, and be a lying Spirit in the mouth of all the Prophets*, and he shall *perswade and prevail*. Thus the Lord still doth. There are many people love not a Minister, that will reprove sinne, that will promote godliness and holiness; but let them have a man, that will let them be at ease in their sinnes and formality. Now God in his just anger, and by his *provoked will* brings such a Minister to such a people: You would have such, and God will have you have such, and they shall *perswade and prevail*. To this purpose also, Jer. 5. 30, 31. Now this will of God in ordering such Officers, is sometimes to increase the condemnation of the Officer himself, and to draw out his sins more. They are Officers in the Church through the anger of God to themselves; they will gnash their teeth that ever they were entrusted with such power, for thereby they become more wicked. Had not *Judas* better have been the poorest wretch in the Church of God, then such an eminent Officer? It is sometimes also for the wickedness and ungodliness of a people; and therefore even those that are godly, who live under such *providential Ministers* (I call them *providential Ministers*, because they are so by his *providence in anger*, not by his *approving will*) they are to consider two things:

2. It is not his angry and just will.

God sometimes doth justly send ungodly Ministers amongst a people.

1. To bless and praise God, that the *lying Spirit in the Minister hath not prevailed on thee*; that he hath not led thee into the ditch, that his poison hath not fallen on thee: Oh admire Gods goodness herein! And withall

In the second place, *Humble thy self under Gods hand.* It is his *will* it should be so, as yet the *providence* of God doth manifest him offended with such a people.

3. *The will of God doth imply, that Paul was not an Apostle by chance or meer hap, but that there was a directing hand of God in it.* And certainly such a consideration would much imbolden Paul; for as he was by the *will of God made an Apostle*, so by the same *will* he should continue, and be preserved in the same, notwithstanding all oppositions whatsoever. And thus all the godly Ministers of the Gospel find the *good will* of God towards them, that they were at first set apart for that function, or by some providence of God brought to desire it. They may find many times a *peculiar will* of God, that sometimes when their friends would have it otherwise, yet God would have them Ministers. And thus

3. It was by the directing will of God, not by chance



also for their designation to such a people. How many times are great discoveries of *Gods will*, that where there was no likelihood, yet God would have him Pastor to such a people? It is of great use both for Minister and people to observe the *special will of God*. For as in civil relations of husband and wife, *tho* God many times discovers a *peculiar will* of his bringing them together, which made the Wiseman say, *Riches were an inheritance, but a wife was the gift of God*. Riches and an inheritance are also the gift of God; but those relations are in a more peculiar manner of him. And it is good for those that are in such relations to quicken themselves by meditation on the *will of God*, that brought such things about, beyond all expectation, or humane providence. Thus also it ought to be in spiritual relations: Oh it is good to lay to heart, how the will of God hath been, that thou shouldst live under a powerfull Ministry, it may be all thy life time, and it hath been denied to others, who often have sought to God for such a mercy. *Act. 16. 6.* You may there read, that *Paul* while in his travails preached the Word every where where he came, yet *was forbidden to preach in Asia*; yet at the same time at the sixth verse, *There stood a man, and cried, Come over into Macedonia, and help us*. See how the Spirit of God *like the wind bloweth where it listeth*, commandeth *Paul* to one place, and forbiddeth him another.

4. It implieth, it was not *Pauls* merit, but Gods will that advanced him to this office.

4. It implieth, *That it was no merit or desert in Paul, which advanced him to this Office*. For as believers, *John 13.* are said, *Not to be born of the will of men, or of the will of the flesh, but of God*, which takes all from man, and giveth all to God: So it is in this work of the Ministry; it is not because men have parts, or learning, or holiness, that God sets them apart for such an Office, but God himself. God tels *Jeremiah*, Chap. 1. 5. *That he had sanctified him from the womb*, that is, set him apart to be his Prophet; and this was before any good at all could be in him. And this also *Paul* himself acknowledgeth, *Gal. 1. 15.* where he saith, *He was separated from the womb*. And observe, how both the work of grace, and his *Apostleship* came together; and the fountain of all is made Gods pleasure, *When it pleased God to call me*. Thus you see, that those who are raised up to be serviceable in the Church, have all from God, both *donatus* and *idea*, *Potentia* and *Potestas*, as they are sometimes distinguished. Hence it is that this *will of God* doth not reach only to the appointing of him to his Office, but the inward preparing and fitting of him for that work. Thus you see that all things necessary for a good Minister is comprehended in this, That he is so *by the will of God*.

Concerning those who enter upon the Ministry only upon carnal and corrupt motives.

But you may say, *What if a Minister should at first enter into this Office merely by the instigation of a corrupt will? Nothing at first made him intend the Ministry but hopes of preferment, and getting a livelihood in the world?*

I answer, It is indeed a most blessed thing, when it is with a Minister, as with *Paul*, he was made an *Apostle* at the same time, when God did also inwardly reveal his grace to him: when from the youth the workings of sanctification, and zeal to convert souls, hath put them upon the Ministry; but where such *corrupt principles* did prevail, and were the only motives to be a Preacher of the Gospel, there must be great humiliation for them: and no doubt many godly Ministers of the Gospel have *greatly bewailed* their *sinfull entrance* into the Ministry, that they had only *corrupt and carnal motives* stirring them up thereunto; and when this is done, no doubt God will accept of their labours, and they be made the more zealous for God.

Use.

*Use of Exhortation*, both to Ministers and People to study and meditate more upon the *will of God* in these things. Am I a Minister by the will of God? Are these my flock by the good pleasure of God? Was it of God, that I was separated and set apart for this work? This will be a great Goad both to duty and comfort. And

For



For the *People*, it is for you to look up to God more in this matter: Can you say, Such an one is a *Pastor* to you by the will of God, not by his *permissive will*, or *providential will* only, for this may be in *wrath* and *anger* to you; but his *approving* and *appointing will*? If so, take heed how ye resist the will of God.



## SERM. IX.

Paul's mentioning of Timothy, shews, That the Godly, though exalted above others in Office and Gifts, yet are humble towards them.

2 COR. I. 1.

And Timothy our brother, &c.

**T**His is the second part of the Inscription, wherein we have the person conjoyned in this *Salutation*, and he is described by his name *Timothy*, and by his relation, *our brother*.

The Apostle doth in several Inscriptions in his Epistles likewise name this *Timothy*, not that he helped *Paul* in composing of them, but partly for *Timothies* encouragement, to shew the good esteem he had of him. As *Nazianzen* (if my memory fail not) in his *Funeral Oration* upon *Basil*, declaring the excellency that was in him, said, If *Basil* had lived in *Paul's* time, he would have prefixed his name in his *salutatory Prefaces*, as he did *Timothy* and *Sylvanus*, &c. And partly because *Timothy*, as to the *Corinthians* had a peculiar relation. For 1 Cor. 4. 17. *Paul* had sent him to them, to put them in remembrance of their duty; and it seemeth, being now returned again unto *Paul*, he informed him of the Churches estate there. So that *Timothy* might well be mentioned, as having some peculiar relation to their Church-affairs. In some other Epistles, he joyneth other persons, as *Sothenes*, &c. Yea, *Gal. 1.* he conjoyneth all the brethren that were with him.

So that we may attribute this to that great humility which was in *Paul*, that though so eminent and transcendent in Office and grace above all others, yet is pleased to make others sit (as it were) upon the Throne with him, and not to arrogate all things presumptuously to himself. Indeed the Popish Commentators, they instance in the Pope, that he calleth other Bishops *Brethren*; but all know, that what title soever he may use, yet he claimeth an *universal Jurisdiction* over them. But in *Paul* it was otherwise. From whence observe,

That the truly godly, though eminent in Office and Graces, yet are exceeding humble, and condescending to those that are farre inferiour to them.

*Paul*, though an Apostle, esteemeth of *Timothy* as a brother, though in other respects, he was his sonne, begotten by his Ministry. The truly godly, and the wicked, they are discovered by their spirits. The spirit of pride and ambition is in all corrupt teachers; And therefore when *Austin* the Monk was sent over by

The truly godly, though eminent in office and grace, yet are humble in themselves and condescending to others.



by the Pope for the conversion of *England*, as they call it, the Monks that were then in the Land opposed him, concluding he had not the Spirit of Christ in him, because he was so full of pride and lordliness; but all the true Officers of Christ, they are endowed with that Spirit which Christ himself had. Now the *holy Ghost* descended in the form of a Dove upon him. And he bids all learn of him, for he was lowly and meek. Hence he tels his Disciples, *That he will not any more call them servants but friends*. Yea after his resurrection he saith, *Go tell my brethren*. The Apostle aggravateth this great condescension of Christ, *Heb. 2. 11*. That though he was the only Sonne of God, yet he humbled himself to become man, and so was not ashamed to call believers brethren. Therefore there cannot be a clearer instance of this humility and condescension then was in Christ himself. Now all the godly they are followers of Christ in this, as well as in other respects; in so much that it is a certain qualification in all the godly, that though God hath never so much above others, yet they become condescending to the lowest Christian: Even as Christ himself disdained not the least that came to him. Hence you have that command, *Mind not high things; but condescend to men of low estate*, *Rom. 12. 16*. Even the poorest and meanest that are godly, are to be cherished and nourished by those that are more eminent. The head must not despise the foot, because both are in the same body. Hence also at the tenth verse in that Chapter, you have a paradoxal exhortation, *In honour to preferre one another*; How can that be? Even because there is no godly man, though never so excellent, but a weaker and meaner Christian may exceed him in some things. Thou hast more gifts, more abilities, but it may be another hath more sincerity than thee. Besides, every godly man, though in the highest form, is acquainted with those infirmities and corruptions that are in his own heart, which he thinketh such, though far inferiour to him, are not guilty of; and hence ariseth that duty of preferring one another amongst the godly.

Wherein the  
humility of  
the godly dis-  
covers it self  
to their inferi-  
ours.

But let us consider, *Wherein this humility in godly superiours doth discover it self to inferiours*. And

First, *It is evident in that they dare not take that honor to themselves, which others looking upon them as far above them are apt to give them, when it's not convenient or proper for them*. This certainly is a great discovery of an humble spirit, when they do even tremble at those praises and reverence, yea reject and refuse it, when it is immoderate. How often are inferiour Christians so dazelled with the lustre of those admirable gifts and graces which are in some superiours, that with *John* to the *Angel*, they are ready to make a god of such, and set them up too much, so as to worship them? But the more godly any such superiours are, the more they refuse it. We see this notably in *Peter*, *Act. 10. 25, 26*. When *Cornelius* fell down at *Peters* feet, and worshipped him; *Peter* took him up, saying, *Stand up, I myself also am a man*; and at another time when the *Barbarians* would have sacrificed to *Paul* and *Barnabas*, accounting them as gods, with what fear and trembling, rending their cloaths at such blasphemy did they come and forbid them? *Act. 14. 15*. Thus you see, let the godly be never so admirable in gifts and graces, yet they will not take more than is due to them. Certainly, if the *Angel* forbade *John*, desirous to worship him, saying, *I am thy fellow servant, worship thou God*; how much rather may every man, though the chiefest of thousands say, *I am your fellow servant, I am subject to sinne and infirmities as well as you*; praise God therefore, and give glory to God. As the Apostles when they had cured a lame man, said, *Why do ye look upon us, as if we had done it by our own power*? So the godly when inabled to preach wonderfully, to pray admirably, or perform any gracious acts above others, they say, *Look not upon us, but upon God*. What an admirable expression of humility is that in *Paul*? *2 Cor. 12. 16*. where he is afraid any should think of him above that he seeth, or heareth to be in him.

Second-



Secondly, The humble condescension of the godly to others, is seen, *In their bearing with their infirmities, and weaknesses in their understanding.* Though they have not such quick abilities, such enlarged capacities, as others have, yet they do not reject them or despise them. This counsel *Paul*, *Rom. 4.* giveth to the strong Christian, *That he should not judge, or despise the weak:* Was not this admirable in *Christ* himself? How weak and slow of understanding were his Disciples, though they had been so long under his Doctrine? yet for all that he disdaineth them not, but he is ready upon all occasions to give them further instruction. And *Paul*, though indeed he doth sharply reprove such, as having great opportunities of knowledge, yet were *carnal and babes still*, as he speaks to the *Corinthians* and the *Hebrews*; yet for all that he doth not cast them off, but useth all means to promote them to further perfection. The eminentest men are condescending to the lowest capacities, where they find godliness and an humble desire to learn.

Thirdly, Their humble condescension is seen, *In the acknowledging and rejoicing at the graces and gifts which they see God bestoweth upon others.* Thus *Paul*, how often doth he profess his praises unto God, and continual thanksgivings in the behalf of them he writeth unto for this particular? Yea they heartily desire such growth in grace, and such plenty of abilities and gifts, though it should be to the overshadowing and eclipsing of them: Even as *John* said about *Christ* with joy, *He must increase, but I must decrease*, *John 3. 3.* And as *Moses*, *Would all the people of God might prophesie*, *Num. 11. 23.* So can they say and delight in such gifts that God shall give to others, though *inferiour*. It's a great fault, and high pride in *Superiours*, to envy, and to look with an ill eye, upon the gifts which God may bestow upon those that are not of their rank. Not that such who have no gifts, should presume as if they had; or those that have gifts, should intrude upon publick preaching, before the examination and approbation of others. To dislike this, is not to envy the gifts and graces that are in others.

Fourthly, Their humble condescension is seen, *In desiring the prayers, and the communion even of those, who are farre below them.* Doth not *Paul* often desire the prayers of those he wrote unto, though he was an *Apostle*; yea he desireth to be with them, *that he may be comforted by them.* There is no godly man, let him have never such extraordinary gifts, and great enjoyments of God, yet he needeth the prayers of the *meanest* of Gods children; yea and by their communion may obtain a great deal of good. They may learn the practice of several graces, and be much quickned up by them.

Lastly, Their humble condescension is seen, *In the compassionate restoring and reclaiming of such who have gone astray.* There is a weakness of parts, and a weakness of graces. Now when some through this latter weakness, have been overcome by temptations, they do not superciliously and scornfully reject such, but labour in a *spirit of meekness* to recover them. *Christ* himself is a president for this, when he compareth himself to the *Shepherd* that went and fetched the lost sheep home upon his own shoulders. As also to that good *Samaritan*, who poured oyl into the wounds of that wounded passenger to *Jericho*. This counsel the *Apostle* gives such as are *spiritual*, *Gal. 6. 1.* *To restore such as are fallen in the spirit of meekness.* And *Paul* himself, with what tears and sorrow did he bewail some *Corinthians* that had defiled themselves?

If you ask, *What grounds there are, why the godly, though thus exalted by God, are yet humble to others?* The Reasons are,

First, *Because they are humbled towards God, and such must needs be humble towards men.* They have these grounds to humble them Godwards.

1. *The sense of all that iniquity which formerly they have committed, or for the present they do commit.* Thus *Paul* from the consciousness of his former impieties

Why those who are so exalted above others, are yet so humble towards them.

did



did till his death go halting with the apprehension of his former miscarriages. They are easily kept *low to others*, whom God keepeth *low to himself*. This leprosie upon them will make them ashamed. Though God hath set them on the *Pinacle of the Temple*, yet they have *corruptions* as others; they feel infirmities in themselves, as well as there are in others. Yea in the general, they are condescending to the meanest acts of service, that may promote the spiritual welfare of others. The Disciples wondered to see *Christ* talk with a woman, *John 4*. thought it below his greatness, as a Prophet to do so; but he said, *It was his meat and drink to his Fathers will*, even in that particular. Thus at another time, *He washed his Disciples feet*, to teach them humility.

2. They are humble towards God, and so towards men, *Because all they have is from the gift of God, it is he alone that maketh the difference*. The Apostle *1 Cor. 4. 7*. speaketh enough to keep the best man in the world, though he had the gifts and graces of Angels, low and humble in himself. *Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou hast not received? 1 Cor. 4. 7*. If then all they have cometh solely from Gods gift, he calleth to an office, he also giveth abilities, then they cannot glory in themselves, but walk humbly with God in all things.

3. They are humble under Gods hand, *Because they do not adde at all to God*. He doth not need any mans parts, or gifts, and therefore he passeth by many, and will never make use of them, who yet if God had pleased might have been far more serviceable than thou art. For did not God reject the Angels, who by their intellectual natures and agility thereof, might have done God more service than thou canst do? Yea the ablest man may look upon all the subtil Hereticks, all the learned men, that have in all ages been promoters of the Devils Kingdom, and then say, *Who hath made me to differ from these?*

Lastly, They are humble towards God, *Because by how much the more God hath lifted them up, the more talents he hath bestowed on them, the greater must their account be*. So that there is more cause of trembling and humiliation under all eminencies and gifts, then any tumor or puffing up. For they are more liable to a severe account, and if they miscarry their condemnation will be greater. Thus you see what cause such have to be humbled towards God, and where that is, there will be an humble condescension to others.

In the second place, A godly man, though exceeding eminent is humble towards others, *Because the meanest godly man, is heir of the same glory, and partaker of the same salvation with him*. So that if you consider them alike in Christ there is no difference, God respecteth them alike. *In Christ* (saith the Apostle) *there is no bond, or free, but all are one in Christ*, *Gal. 3. 21*. And upon this account it is, that *Masters* are exhorted, *To do that which was equal to servants, that were believers, because they had the same Lord*. Only you must know, that there is a true humility and a counterfeit one; Grace doth not put upon the latter, but the former. For a counterfeit humility makes a man pusillanimous, not keeping up the due authority of his place and office. The Apostle, though so humble, that he judged himself *less than the least of the Apostles*, yet saith, *He would magnifie his Office*, and he pleadeth for it against all opposers whatsoever.

Use.

To discover our spirits, how we are when exalted to any Office, or enlarged by any gifts: Are not we who are apt to charge pride in others, guilty of a great deal our selves? We look upon those that are higher with a censorious eye, not considering that there are many under us, who measure out the same judgment to us. Take then the Apostles advise, *Be clothed with humility*; the Greek word is rarely, *1 Pet. 3. 5*. used. This ought to be a garment all over us; nothing but the spirit of humility should breath and live in us. And indeed this is the way to be made higher still. *For God giveth grace to the humble; and the humble he will teach his way*.





S E R M, X.

*There is a great deal of difference betwixt the Persons whom God calls, and also in the manner of his calling them. Education under godly Parents not to be rested upon, but our Hearts are to be sought into, whether they be really changed, or no.*

2 COR. I. I.

*And Timothy our brother, &c.*

**V**WE are upon the *Person* conjoyned in this *Inscription*; and that is *Timothy*, who is likewise inscribed in the *Preface* in several other *Epistles*.

Some have thought that because of this conjunction of him with *Paul*, that therefore *Timothy* did assist *Paul*, in making and composing of some *Epistles*: But that is not probable. He doth it (as you heard) to encourage *Timothy*, and also hereby manifesting his modesty, and humble condescension.

We have then the *Person* described by his name, *Timothy*; and by his relation, *Brother*. Not in a large sense, as *Paul* sometimes calls all believers *Brethren*, but in a special respect, because of his Office he was in, though at other times he calls him *Son*; of which in its time.

Let us first consider his *Name*, and so his *Person*; and then his *relation*.

His name is *Timothy*, as much as *one that is for the honour of God*; and so indeed he proved in an admirable manner instrumental thereunto. We may read of what parents he came, *Acts* 16. 1, 2. his *Father* was a *Grecian*, and an *Infidel*, but his *Mother* a *Jewish* woman, and one that *believed*. For *Paul* in *2 Tim.* 1. 5. gives a great commendation of his *Grandmother* and *Mother*, and so to *himself*, as if their faith had been *hereditary*. For although his *Father* was a *Gentile*, yet because his *Mother* *believed*, she took so much pains with him, as that he *knew the Scriptures from his youth up*. Insomuch that *Nazianzen* said, *It was a great benefit to have godly Parents, especially to have a godly Mother*; because the mother, if holy, hath many opportunities to instill holy principles into the children, while young. And therefore *Solomon* speaks much of the *instructions*, which his *Mother* gave him.

Concerning this *Timothy* therefore, two things are observable:

1. That he being educated in an hopeful, godly way from his youth, and for the good report that he had in the Church of God, as appeareth, *Acts* 16. 2.



As also because of some *Prophecies* and *extraordinary Revelations*, what an usefull instrument he would be in the Church of God, *Paul* took a great affection to him; and made him an Officer in the Church, while he was a young man. So that *Timothy* was in respect of his condition clean contrary to *Paul*; *Paul* a persecuter, a blasphemers, an enemy, and that for a long while; but *Timothy* hopefull, and a disciple from the youth up.

The second thing observable is, That though *Timothy* was thus brought up with godly Parents, and so knew the Scriptures from his youth. And as *Calvin* thinketh, because of that expression, 2 Tim. 5. where he *was persuaded of the unfeigned faith that was in Timothy*, as well as his Mother, that it doth relate not to *Timothy* at that time, who was no doubt an eminent believer, but to his infancy or younger yeares, yet that seemeth not coherent with that which *Calvin* saith in another place, viz. 1 Tim. 1. 2. where, because *Paul* calls *Timothy* his own Sonne in the faith, he saith, *That Paul was his spiritual Father in begetting of him to Christ*. It is therefore disputed, Whether *Timothy* was not converted from his youth, or by *Paul's* ministry afterward, as he did *Onesimus*, while in bonds? Some think, because he calls him *γυναικὸς υἱός*, his germane, or sincere Sonne, not spurious, that he was the means of his conversion; as 1 Cor. 4. he saith, *He had begotten the Corinthians by the Gospel*. Others say, because he was so greatly instructed in the Christian faith, and so hopefull, *Paul* took him for a companion, and much delighted in him; and therefore *Timothy* a young man was serviceable to *Paul*, aged in propagating the Gospel; as a sonne to the father: and this the Apostle insinuateth upon a large commendation of *Timothy*, Phil. 2. 22. Others they think, That though *Timothy* might be converted from his youth, yet *Paul* did further instruct and convert him in the things of Christ, and so it was equivalent to a conversion. Now all these three respects may be allowed of, and have their seasonable matter of Doctrine.

But let us first consider, The great difference between *Paul* a convert, and *Timothy* a convert; one from his younger years a blasphemers, an high sinner; the other a disciple, and unblameable in his life; then observe,

*That there is a great difference both in the persons, and the manner of conversion of those, whom God is pleased effectually to call, and to make use of.*

They are not of the same condition or qualifications, that God calleth; neither are they brought home in the same manner. This Doctrine hath its great usefulness, as will appear.

But let us consider the various conditions, and then the different manner of their conversion.

First, Some are great and notorious sinners: Others again, are of a more civil and sober life. Some have from their youth up been kept from all gross sinne, as *Joseph*, *Daniel*, *Obadiab*, and our *Timothy* in the Text. Others again have been very foul and scandalous, as *Paul*, *Mary Magdalen*, and divers of the *Corinthians*. Thus God cutteth down sometimes crooked trees, and sometimes straight, and makes his spiritual building of them. God can turn a barren wilderness into a pleasant spring, *He can raise up children to Abraham out of stones*. God is free in the work of grace, and so takes sometimes a great sinner, and sometimes such as are unspotted in their ways.

Secondly, There is a great difference sometimes in their constitutions; some are of a more fierce and cholerick temper; others again of a more mild, and

There is a great deal of difference both in the persons that are converted, and in the manner of their conversion.



and meek temper. *Moses*, he is ſaid to be the meekeſt man that was upon the earth: But *Elijah* ſeemed to be a man of more fire and paſſion. Among the Apoſtles, *John* diſcovers himſelf to be a man of much love, as he was alſo much beloved; but *Peter* appeareth to be a man of more zeal, and ſometimes inordinate heat, as when he ſtruck off *Malchus* his ear. Thus all the godly are not of the ſame conſtitution and temperament; ſome are more paſſionate choleric; others more mild and temperate, yet God he chooſeth of all ſorts.

Thirdly, There may be difference in their externals; Some are rich, others poor; ſome are great in place and office, others are mean and inferiours. For although 1 Cor. 1. *Paul* ſaith, Not many noble, not many wiſe, not many rich hath God choſen, yet ſome he hath, though not many. Yea, thoſe that have been by their callings greatly engaged to ſinne, and to act againſt Chriſt, yet even of ſuch God hath called ſome; ſome of the *Phariſees*, yea ſome of the *Prieſts* that were the moſt profeſſed enemies to Chriſt, are yet ſaid to believe in him. And thus in times of Reformation from Popery, although *Luther* ſaid, In the Monasteries and Frieries there was greater oppoſition to the Goſpel, than in the very Ale-houſes and Brothel-houſes; yet *Luther* himſelf, and ſome others were Monks. Yea, as he ſaith of himſelf, *Infanſſimum Monachum*, mad in doting upon Popiſh opinions, yet God converted them.

Thus you ſee a world of difference in the Externals of thoſe that God calls; We might alſo adde the Difference in reſpect of their Vicinity and Conſanguinity. God calls ſometimes out of a wicked Family, a wicked generation, a wicked place, where there is none elſe ſcarce that minds any thing that is godly. In *Ceſar's* houſhold there were ſome that believed; ſometimes you have a Child converted, when Parents and all the Kinred are deſperate enemies to God: Sometimes again, you have Parents and Children, and all godly, as it was with *Timothy*, in reſpect of his Mother and Grand-mother.

In the next place, Gods conversion of his people is in a different manner. Some have been in an extraordinary manner, as *Paul*, and many in the Primitive times: Others in the ordinary way of the Word; ſome have had more ſtrange and remarkable paſſages to convert them than others.

2. Some have more deep humiliation, and greater terrours upon them than others. As ſome children are born with more pain and difficulty than others. Thus *Paul*, he was greatly humbled in his ſpirit, and brought low, whereas *Matthew* the Publican ſeemed to be converted; without ſuch deep impreſſion on his heart. *Mary Magdalen* likewise had great humiliation and bitterneſs of ſpirit, elſe ſhe could not have wept ſo abundantly as to waſh Chriſts feet. But we read of *Lydia*, when God opened her heart, that ſhe deſired to entertain the Apoſtles, and diſcovered not ſuch commotions of ſoul.

3. There is great difference ſometimes in the continuance, others are longer in the birth, they have many conflicts, ſometimes they are even entering the Haven; and then ſome violent ſtorms drive them back again. Thus *Auſtin* confeſſeth of himſelf, That he had many troubles on his heart, and had many reſolves and prayers againſt his finnes, yet ſtill he gave back again, and would procratiſtinate, he would weep and pray, but ſinne again, till at laſt God brought him out of the wombe of ſinne, and he returned no more to his vomit. Others again, as many we read of in the Scripture, were immediately wrought upon, and with all gladneſs received Chriſt.

Laſtly, There is variety in the occaſions, and in the time. In the occa-



Why God is pleased to call such different persons, and in such a different way.

sions, one affliction hath been an occasion to some such or such a correction upon them; a wife may sometimes be an occasion to her husband, or an husband to a wife: Yea, a maid-servant was to *Naaman* both an occasion of his soul and body's health likewise. And thus for *time* likewise, some are converted *sooner*, and some *later*; onely you must know, that though there may be this difference, yet in these things all agree.

1. That the work of grace is wrought *invincibly and irresistibly in all*. There are none that by their own power, or free-will make themselves to differ from others, all are passive in the work of Regeneration. And

2. Though afflictions may be an occasion and a motive, yet it's the word of God that is the only ordinary means of our conversion.

Now the Reasons why God useth these various dispensations to all sorts, may be,

First, *To shew the freeness of Grace*. For if one sort of persons onely be converted, it might be thought some merit or desert were in them, which was not in others.

Secondly, Hereby likewise God sheweth, *That he doth not need any*. It's not because he wants such, that he converts them, for if so, then only great men and learned men would be converted.

Lastly, It might be, that none of any rank should despair; and therefore the command is *2 Tim. 2. That we should pray for all, because God would have all to be saved*; that is of all sorts, whether *Kings*, or *Governours*, who were then most unlikely, because the greatest enemies to Christs Kingdom.

*Use 1.* Doth not God keep then to one way in respect of the persons and manner of conversion? Then this should teach every godly man, *Not to make his conversion a measure of others*; unless they have been humbled and wrought upon in such a measure, and with such kind of temptations, we are apt to judge harshly of them. Now although every one that is regenerated is brought to see himself lost and undone, and thereby to believe in a Saviour, yet the measure of sorrow, and degree of humiliation may be in one, more than in another.

*Use 2.* Of *Direction to the people of God*, that in these various dispensations of Gods grace, *They should mutually consider one another*. Doth God choose thee a meek mild man, grudge not, or censure those, who are rough and of a more passionate disposition? But let all the children of God admire the grace and power of God, that doth subdue all things to himself. And though thou mayest not have that temptation or infirmity in thee, which thou judgest in another, yet thou mayest have another corruption of another nature: So that the consideration of this, should breed great love amongst the godly, and every one be provoked to give glory unto the grace of God, which is all in all.

The second Doctrine is gathered from the necessity, if not of conversion, yet of that which was almost equivalent to *Timothy*, though enjoying very godly education. And from thence observe,

*That none are to rest upon their godly education under godly parents, but they are to consider whether the work of Grace hath ever been wrought in them or no.*

*Calvin* (as you heard) thought *Paul* a spiritual Father to *Timothy*, and that he was converted by his Ministry, though of such excellent education; and all agree, That whatsoever seed of grace he might have in his younger years, yet there

None are to rest upon their godly education, but all are to search their own hearts, to see whether they be wrought upon or no.



there was a more perfect and compleat informing of him by Paul.

Briefly to open this, Consider

First, That it cannot be denied, but that some may be converted from their youth; that they have had the holy fear of God upon them, ever since they were able to understand any thing. 1 King. 18. 12. Obadiah told Elisha, *He feared the Lord from his youth.* And thus John Baptist did partake of the holy Ghost, while he was in his mothers womb: and it is a most blessed mercy thus to have our spiritual and natural life together: They are preserved from those wounds that others go halting with to the grave. Yet

In the second place, *They are not to rest upon this, who have lived civilly from their youth, and followed their good education.* For good Education is one thing, and Regeneration is another thing. The one is but external, and maketh onely an outward Reformation; but the other is internal, and makes a spiritual change, Mat. 19. 20. We read of one, *He had kept all the commandments from his youth;* who said, he spoke according to his education and instruction. For the Pharisees taught, That the Law required no other obedience then what is outward. Now he had kept himself from any outward pollution, or gross transgression. But we have a remarkable instance in King Joash, 2 Chron. 23. 2. *Jehoiada* a godly man brought up that King in a godly manner, and he did that which was right all the while *Jehoiada* lived, but when he died, than he hearkned to the counsel of others, that were the means of his ruine. Therefore consider, whether thou hast any more then the remnants of good education upon thee; in time of temptation thy rottenness will be discovered. But

Thirdly, Grant that thou hast received grace from the very womb, yet know, *That upon thy growing up, the world will make a great change and alteration upon thee.* For they were but the seeds and initials of grace, it's the word of God that must further compleat and perfect thee. Therefore that illumination, and degree of sanctification, which thou shalt be partaker of, will be (as it were) a new thing to thee, thou wilt think thy self to have been in the dark, and to have known nothing comparatively to what now thou doest. So that although we are not to puzzle and perplex the godly, with the knowledge of the time when and where; and how they were converted, as if that were necessary; yet we are to find that God made a change upon us; we are not what we would have been by nature; we find God making those tender plants, or that little mustard-seed to grow up into a large and great Tree.

*Use of Examination.* See what God hath done upon thy heart, as well as parents. It will be no sure argument to plead, I had a godly father, and godly parents, I have been alwayes used to godly duties; but search, and again search, whether thou art a new creature. Use.





## SERM. XI.

*How much it concerns Church-Officers to agree in matters of Religion. What meanes may conduce to it. Universities and Nurseries of Religion, of how great use they are to the Church of Christ.*

2 COR. 1. 1.

*And Timothy our brother, &c.*

**W**E are now to take notice of the second Description, that *Timothy* is adorned with, and that is a *brother* to *Paul*. He is called a *brother*, not in a large sense, as all believers likewise are, but because of a special relation, he being also a Church-officer, though in an inferiour degree to *Paul*. And he styleth him *brother*, not only from his humility and low condescension: Of which already; but also to shew his consent and agreement with *Paul* in all those things treated of in the Epistles. As he calls him *Brother*, so he often useth the compellation of a *Sonne*, because he was not only the instrument, either of conversion, or further institution of *Timothy* in the wayes of Christ: but because in the ministration of the Gospel, *Paul* was a father to him, directing him how to manage his ministerial employment; and therefore he writeth two Epistles to him, which he doth to none else; and all are to direct and guide him in his Office. So that it was *Timothy's* great happiness to have such a *Gamaliel*, as *Paul* was, and to be brought up at his feet, as he was at *Gamaliels*.

There are two profitable Observations deduceable. First, In that *Paul* calls him *Brother*; hereby shewing their consent and agreement in the matter delivered. We may observe,

The consent of Church-officers in matters of religion, is of great use and moment.

*That the consent and agreement of Church-officers in religious matters is of great use and moment.*

If *Paul* should have written one thing, and *Timothy* another, or the clean contrary, this might have occasioned great distraction amongst the *Corinthians*, not knowing what to believe, or which way to take. Consent is so great a matter, or unity, that the *Roman* party makes it a note of a true Church, although they cannot greatly glory in that note.

To understand this,

First, *There is a most perfect and absolute consent and agreement, and that not only in matters of Religion, but also in all civil ordinary things.* So that all the Officers of the Church have the same *velle*, and the same *nolle*, which the Heathen said was true friendship indeed. Now such a consent as this, is not to be expected in this life. That glorious priviledge will be in Heaven, where not only



only several sects and opinions shall cease, but also there shall be no more diversity in their wills and affections. The Apostolical Church could not be thus happy. For we read of the *Apostles* twice contending, who should be the greatest amongst them? and this came from pride and carnal affections: afterwards we read, *Act. 25. 39.* of a *paroxysme*, or a sharp contention between *Paul* and *Barnabas*, which was so great, that they departed one from another, who before had been companions in a fruitfull manner to publish the Gospel of Christ. If such spots can be found in these Sunnes, no wonder if they be in the Moons, the lesser lights of the Church. Yea *Gal. 1.* there we may read of an high contest, and that was not indeed about a doctrinal matter of Religion, but in practice, which did relate to Religion: for there *Paul* resisted *Peter* to the face, and blamed him before them all. Thus you see, that though there were none, but *Pauls* and *Barnabasses*, none but *Pauls* and *Peters*, and such eminent Apostles in the Church of God, yet we could not look for such an absolute and perfect concord, that there should not be the least difference in any thing. The Church never was, or will be like the upper region, that is not molested with the least turbulent vapour.

Secondly, *There is a full conformity or agreement in the substantials and necessities of Religion; and also in all the accessories and circumstantials therein.* And this is the next perfect Unity to the former; and this was in the *Apostolical Church*. Those that were the true Officers of Christ, had no difference either in Doctrine or Church-government, or worship of God; but they were all unanimous, as farre as may be observed. Indeed *Act. 15. 1.* we read of some *Pharisees* who were said to believe, That they taught a necessity of *circumcision and observation of Mosaical Rites to the converted Gentiles*, which made a very great rupture and schisme in the Churches, while newly planted. And although there was a Council gathered together to stop this breach, and Decrees made to regulate the Church herein, yet it should seem that their Authority and Interest did not pluck up this division by the root. For *Paul* in some of his Epistles, makes this his great doctrinal scope, to establish them in their Christian liberty; but for the Apostles themselves, and the faithfull Officers in the Church, they seemed as to teach the same thing, so to walk in the same order, and wayes of Christ.

Lastly, *There is a consent and agreement in the essentials, and fundamentals of holiness; but difference and hot dissensions in those things, that are preter, or circa-fundamentals, as also in matters of Discipline and Government.* Now although we maintain against *Papists*, That by the good blessing of God, all the Reformed Churches (excluding *Socinians*, &c.) do agree in the essentials to salvation: yet it must be likewise granted, That in respect of accessories, there are sad divisions, and wofull rents in the Church of God. The name of *Lutherans* and *Calvinists*, as also of several forms of Government, do argue, that there is a great breach amongst us. And this we must expect to have alwayes in the Church, as long as men are subject to ignorance, mistakes, and carnal affections. And therefore we are not to be offended and scandalized at it, much less hearken to *Popish* Emissaries, who take this advantage amongst weak people, to perswade them, that the Church of *Rome* is therefore the only true Church.

These things premised, let us consider what are cementing and uniting principles; what do conduce to Unity amongst the Officers of God in his Church. And

First, That which is alwayes willing to be last is *Humility*, and a spirit of meekness and moderation. You never heard of an humble man, that he was a disturber of the Church, or broacher of heresies. Hereticks have alwayes been proud, haughty and ambitious men, as *Marcion*, *Nestorius*, and others, especially

What are those things that conduce to Unity amongst Church officers.



cially the Pope of Rome, who exalteth himself above all that is called God. Were then men of more humble and lowly spirits, having low apprehensions of their gifts and abilities, this would wonderfully make to consent and agreement.

Secondly, *Earnest and fervent prayer unto God for the holy Spirit.* For seeing it's the Spirit of God that is promised to lead us into the truth, And Officers of the Church have a more peculiar promise for it above ordinary believers, as being in a more peculiar Office, and receiving a proper Commission from Christ: It is therefore necessary to implore this assistance of Gods Spirit. For whereas the *Papist* doth scornfully, and with derision ask, *How comes it about, that seeing every Sect in the Protestants, doth lay claim to the Spirit of God, all owning it to be their guider in their several wayes? How comes it about, that yet these spirits are so contrary to one another? Can the holy Spirit of God be opposite to it self?* To this calumny it is easily answered, That all Officers and Teachers, do not equally, and in the same measure partake of Gods Spirit. For besides that, there is not now any such measure of it given to any Officers in the Church, that makes them infallible; There is an inequality and difference in the degrees of partaking of this *holy Spirit of God*, so farre as it is communicable. Some have it more in the gift of illumination; some more in the gift of sanctification; and withall some are more negligent and faulty than others. And therefore the holy Ghost is not communicated to all alike. For pride, negligence, want of fervent and earnest prayer, makes the Spirit of God to keep off from us. Oh then, that all who have inspection in the Church of Christ, were more earnest for Gods Spirit, that he would enlighten us, and direct us; howsoever that he would so sanctifie us, that if we did erre, yet we shall not be obstinate and pertinacious in it.

Thirdly, *An uniting principle is to take heed of self-will and self-conceit, to make our wils and humours, or apprehensions, the Law and Rule of truth.* The Apostle amongst other qualifications in an Elder requireth, *Tit. 1. 7. That he be not self-willed, audacious*, one that pleaseth himself, or is self-conceited of his own abilities. For all heresies and divisions are bred in the womb of this self-conceit: and commonly the more ignorant, and the less knowing, the more obstinate and self-conceited. For the more knowledge any man hath, the more he apprehends his own weakness and ignorance; he also seeth the strength of such arguments, which one of a shallow capacity can no more reach unto, than a *Pigmy* can the *Pyramides*. More principles might be offered unto you, but I have spoken to this at large from *John 17.* where our Saviour prayeth over and over again for unity amongst believers, as if it were the only pillar of all sound Doctrine, and true holiness. Only the usefulness of this agreement is seen in the good influence that it will have upon the body of believers; a divided Ministry, will also make a divided people. If those bright luminaries of Heaven, should oppose one another, as the Moon doth sometimes the Sunne, what sad Eclipses doth it produce? We read *1 Cor. 3.* that amongst these *Corinthians* there were heavy divisions, though that seemed to be the peoples sin most, who made such a difference, one saying, *I am for Paul*, another, *I am for Apollo*.

Let the Use be, To us all to importune God, who is the God of peace, and who alone can fashion the hearts and minds of men alike, that he would bless the Church with this Unity. Oh how greatly would godliness flourish, errours be discouraged, if it could be said, of all believers, which is spoken of the primitive Christians often, *That they met together with one accord, and with one heart!* Oh how blessed is it to see the whole Church of God, rather than one family, or City to dwell together in Unity!

The next thing observable is, in that *Timothy*, who is here called a Brother, is at other times very often called a Sonne. And besides the Reasons insisted on the last



last day, there is another mentioned, *Phil. 2.22.* that *Paul* was as a *Father* to him, instructing of him about his Ministerial Office, and therefore had two Epistles wrote to him for the managing of *Ecclesiastical affairs* in a godly manner. This great help and tuition (as it were) *Timothy* had from *Paul*, being made a Church-officer, while he was young. Observe,

*That it is of great consequence to such who in their young years are set apart for the Ministry to have the guidance of those who are more solid and experienced.*

It is of great use to young to have the guidance of solid and experienced Ministers.

Thus *Christ* himself, though he could have immediately furnished his *Apostles* with admirable and sufficient abilities for the great work of *Apostleship*, yet kept them two years, as the *Harmonists* gather, under his peculiar charge and information. In the Old Testament likewise, though the gift of prophesie was by immediate inspiration, yet we read that even then there was the *Colledge of the Prophets*, and the *sons of the Prophets*, *2 King. 2.7.* So we read *2 Chron. 34. 22.* of the *Colledge of the Prophets*. Hence it is also in the New Testament, that the *Apostle* directing of *Timothy*, how to keep up the sound Doctrine of *Christ* after his departure, giveth this notable instruction, *2 Tim. 2.2.* *That what Doctrine he had heard from Paul, he should commit to faithfull men, that should teach others.* That is a very full and pregnant Text. For the usefulness of *Universities*, that there should be *Nurseries*, wherein young ones should be trained up to deliver the sound Doctrine to their Posterity after them. Though in those primitive times there was such a plentiful effusion of the Spirit of God in the gifts thereof, yet he there commands, *that faithfull men should be chosen*, who should commit to posterity, one age after another, the true Doctrine of *Christ*; and therefore in the primitive times, before there were *Universities*, the *Bishops* house was a *Nursery* to train up young *Disciples*. And in *Origen's* time, he began to be a *Catechist*, and to set open a School in reference to the *Christian Religion*. If there be in such publick *Nurseries* and *Universities*, gross abuses, men degenerating into laziness, and not fulfilling the general intention of the *Founders*, the abusers are to be purged away, but not the order or manner of education it self. If it be said, The the Spirit of God is that which alone inableth a man to such Offices and Employments. We grant that the *Spirit of God* is the alone Sanctifier of all gifts and abilities; but yet now the *Spirit of God* doth not work in an immediate and miraculous manner, else why is there not working of *Miracles*? Why do they not speak in all Tongues? Why do they not understand *Hebrew* and *Greek*, which are the original Languages the Scripture was written in? If therefore we must not look for the *Spirit of God* in such an immediate way, it must be in a mediate and acquired way. And this ordinary way doth not exclude *Gods Spirit*, but supposeth it. For if in those days, when miraculous gifts were ordinary, yet see what charge *Paul* layeth upon *Timothy*, to give himself to *reading and studying of the Scriptures*; especially that is observed by *Calvin*, *1 Tim. 4. 13.* *Till I come, give thy self to reading*; he would not have him so much as neglect that little time. No wonder if in these later days such duties are more vehemently to be pressed.

*Use of Exhortation to you that are people*; to be of more publick spirits in your prayers, not only regarding your present age, but that the truths of God may be handed from age to age; that the *Universities* may be pure fountains, and hopefull *Nurseries*, from whence may come such, who shall be able to propagate the pure Doctrins of *Christ*. *Peter* was carefull that after his decease the pure Doctrins of *Christ* might be preserved. And so for your children, and childrens sake, that they may not live in times of ignorance and darkness, importune God earnestly, that he would keep up such faithfull men and good wayes, that may propagate the Gospel to the worlds end.





## SERM. XII.

## Of the Name and Nature of a Church.

2 COR. I. 1.

*To the Church of God, which is at Corinth, &c.*

FROM the Persons inscribing, we come to the Persons inscribed, or to those to whom this salutatory Preface, and so the whole Epistle is directed; and that is set down, 1. More particularly, and then more generally. More particularly; and they are described by the relative condition and estate they are in, viz. a Church [To the Church] which is further described topically from the place where it is, *At Corinth*.

Let us consider this particular first. And for the opening the word *Church*, we might spend much time therein; but I shall briefly explicate it.

What the word Church is used for in Scripture.

The word is used, and that only in *Act. 19.* for a *Civil Assembly*. Yea, it's said *ἡ ἐκκλησία συγκεχυμένη*, *The Assembly was confused*. The Athenians called their public meetings *ἐκκλησίαι*; The word is used in *Thucydides*, as the learned observe. The Hebrew hath two words *Cobel*, which is for the most part translated *Ecclesia* by the *Septuagint*, and *Gnedeth* which is translated *ἐκκλησία*; the Church, doth rather answer *Cobel*, than *Gnedeth*, because under the New Testament it is not fixed. As for such who would understand that place, *Mat. 18. Tell the Church*, of a *Senate or Civil Power*, it's so improbable, that it's not worth time to confute it. The word therefore is most frequently used in the New Testament, for an holy Society gathered together in an holy manner for holy ends. And thus it is used either for the *Catholick, invisible Church*, which is the whole body of Christ, that shall be saved, as when he is said, *Ephes. 5. To give himself for his Church; and the Church is made the wife of Christ*. And *Col. 1. 24.* it's called *the body of Christ*. This Church is meant in the Creed, when we believe there is an holy *Catholick Church*, and so a *Communion of Saints*, though some would have it a communion in holy things. To this Church belonged all the godly that lived in the Old Testament. For that is a dangerous error of the *Socinians*, that make the Church in the Old Testament specifically distinct from that in the New, as if they were not saved by the same Christ, and the same faith, as we are under the Gospel.

Now it's very necessary to distinguish this *Catholick invisible Church* from a *visible particular one*. The *Papists* confounding these, and making their *Roman particular Church*, a *Catholick one*, and applying such Texts of Scripture, as are spoken of the Universal invisible Church, to their particular, do thereby grossly mistake in pleading for the infallibility and perpetuity of their Church. But

Secondly, The Scripture doth use the word *Church* for a *visible company of persons professing faith in Christ*, and then it hath several acceptions. For sometimes it is used for the *general Company of believers*, *Act. 8. 3.* Thus *Paul* is said to *persecute the Church*. Or else more particularly, and for a Church at such a place,



place, as the Church at Jerusalem, the Church at Corinth. Again, the word Church is sometimes used more strictly, for the People only, as distinct from Pastors. Thus the Epistles of John are directed, To the Angels of the seven Churches. Thus the Elders are exhorted, *Act. 20. 28. To feed the Church of God, over which they were set.* And in this sense the Remonstrants speak confidently, That the word Church is most commonly used, and that never, or very seldom, it comprehends the Officers also. But this is not so, for *Mat. 18. Tell the Church,* by the Church must needs be meant Officers at least with the Church, for they are said to bind and loose, which power is given to Officers only. It's true, they, and so Grotius, by Church understand a multitude, or more, in opposition to those two or three witnesses, that were required before: But the Context may easily be improved to overthrow that *1 Cor. 12. 28. God is there said to set in his Church, some Pastors, and Teachers,* that is, as part, but the chief part of the Church. Even as the Starres are set in the firmament, but as parts of the Heavens, though the more noble and fulgent parts. Again, when the Apostle here writeth to the Church of Corinth, he must needs comprehend the Officers as well as the People, because he writeth about such duties, wherein the Officers were interested, as the censuring of the incestuous person; he speaks also of Prophets, which were extraordinary Officers in that Church, and they are blamed for *male-administration about the Sacrament of the Lords-Supper.* So that although Grotius thinketh that abuse was, because they had no constituted Officers, yet it's plain they had some, because they had the administration of the Sacraments.

Lastly, The word Church is applied sometimes to an essential Church, as it is called, for a company of believers simply as such believing in Christ, of which often in Scripture, sometimes for an organized Church, that is, formed and stated in that godly order by a Ministry, Government and Discipline conjoyned together. So that they make a particular flock being bound to submit to their Pastors, as their peculiar Pastors, and Pastors bound to watch over them, as their peculiar flock. Whether indeed this Church of Corinth was one Congregational Church, or one Church aggregated of several Congregations, is disputed. But of this in its time. This Church of Corinth was formed and stated in some order, though there were great abuses in it. As for our common use of the word Church, taking it for a place, or the material building, that is an improper speech, but allowable by a Synecdoche, as the word *συναγωγὴ* signifieth, both the place and persons therein convened. And although one or two learned men from *1 Cor. 11.* would have the word used there for a place; yet the arguments are not cogent; for the people are properly the Church, it's they that Christ hath redeemed, they are to be built up by Pastors and Teachers, whereas the material Church is built by manual Artificers, not needing an Apostle, but a Carpenter.

This may suffice for Explication, only let this be added, that the Greek word relates to Gods calling, it signifieth a Society called by God. So that the Apostle directs his Epistle to that Society or company of persons that did come out from the Heathenish Idolatries and abominations, that the other Corinthians lived in, and did profess their faith in Christ, with obedience to him. From whence observe,

That a Church is a company called of God by the preaching of the Word to the profession of faith in Christ, and an observation of all that solemn worship and Ordinances which Christ hath appointed, with a life in external conformity thereunto.

What we are properly to understand by a Church in Scripture.

This is a Church. When you read of a Church at Jerusalem, a Church at Corinth, the seven Churches of Asia, you are to understand such a company. And this



this Doctrine about a Church is much to be insisted on. People are generally carnal, ignorant and prophane. And although they would think it an high reproach to have the name of a Church denied them, or to be cast out of the Church, as so many Heathens, yet they do not attend to the nature of a Church, nor to the properties of those who are to be members thereof. It is true, there are vast and infinite Disputes about a Church, and every sect or party, is ready to monopolize and appropriate that name to them, That they are only the Church. But these great Disputes about it, argue we should be more carefull to distinguish, lest we take Babylon for Jerusalem, lest we take that for Gods Temple, which is indeed a den of thieves. Doth not the Popish party glory in the name of a Church? Do they not make it necessary to salvation to come into communion with it? and yet it is the place, that Gods people are called to come out of, lest they partake both of her sins and punishments.

But let us examine the chief particulars in the Doctrine, which is a popular description of a Church. And

First, We say, *It is a Society or Company*. So that one man cannot be called a Church. It's absurd in the *Papists*, that when they have lifted up the name of a Church like a *Gorgons head*, to turn all men into stones, that they must not mutter a word against it; when you come to examine, what this Church is, at last it is but one man, and that is the Pope. What number goeth to make a Church is not defined. To a formed organized Church, there must be so many at least, that Church duties, which are essential, may be performed; and a distinction between Governours, and governed maintained; otherwise where two or three are, there is a Church, said *Tertullian*. Again, In that it is a Company, we see, That it is not lawfull for a man to think of serving God alone by himself, when there is an opportunity of joyning to a Church. You read *Act. 3.* and *4.* as any persons were converted, presently they joyned themselves to the Church. It is true, there may be such persecutions, or other impediments, that Christians have wandered up and down, and could not enjoy publick or private meetings; but this absence from Church-communion was an heavy burden on their spirits. And as *David*, when banished from the publick Ordinances, lamented it more than banishment from his own house, and land, and native countrey. Thus they cryed out with him, *As the Hart panteth after the water brooks, so pant our souls after thee, O God.* You see then it's a duty to be of a Church. Hence because a Church is a company, we are diligently to attend to what is our duty, as we are a Church, and this you had need hear of often. For you must know you are under a two-fold consideration; One *Absolute*, as a private and single person, and so you have several duties to attend unto. 2. *Relative*, as you are a member of a Church, or part of such a Society; and so there are choice and special duties. Your solemn Church-duties, such as hearing, praying, and all other publick worship, are to be preferred above all private. He can never be a good Christian that is not a good member of that Church he is of. As in Politicks it's acknowledged, he cannot be *bonus vir*, which is not *bonus civis*, not a good man, that is not a good Citizen. Now certainly, here is a wonderfull neglect and general fault in all our Congregations; we attend not to our Church-duties, to our Church-communion, what God doth require of us, as a Society, as a spiritual Company; there would not be that neglecting of the Assemblies, those wicked and ungodly meetings, to be drunk, to be carnally merry and jolly, which are directly contrary to Church-meetings. Nothing doth so resemble Heaven, as the Church Assemblies spiritually performed; and to such meetings God hath promised his more peculiar presence and assistance. But of this more in its time.

In the next place, there is added in the Doctrinal Description, *That it is a Company of persons called of God by the preaching of the Word*: Wherein are considerable



siderable, the *Efficient Cause*, and the *Instrumental*. The *Efficient* is God, *Called by God*. And first, In that they are said to be *called by God*. This implieth these things:

1. That it's the *meer goodnes* and *grace of God* that makes a people to be a Church. Therefore they are thus named *Ecclesia*. The *Grecians* called their *Assemblies* so, because of some humane Authority gathering them together; but the people of God are called a Church, because God calls them. So that as there is a difference between a garden and a wilderness; the one is naturally so, but the other is planted by art and industry; nature doth not of it self, especially since mans fall, bring forth gardens and choice flowers, but there is great art and culture required thereunto. Thus it is with the Church, men are made the Church by Gods grace, but they are the world of themselves. The world and the Church are two opposites, God makes the one, and is present in a special manner there, but *sinne* and *Satan* make and rule in the other. When the *Psalmist* said, *It is he that hath made us, not we ourselves, we are the sheep of his pasture*. Calvin understands it of their Church making; it was the goodnes and power of God that made them so. Hence it is, that it is often compared to, and called the *Kingdom of Heaven*, because it's original is from Heaven, and their Laws and Ordinances are heavenly. Thus you see, to be made a Church is not by our humane will and power, as men make themselves Cities and Corporations, but by a special grace of God.

2. When therefore we are said to be *called by God*, that doth necessarily suppose a *terminus* from which we are called. It's a company of persons called out from the world, wherein once they were. Hence the Apostle, 1 Cor. 5. doth oppose the world, and the Church together; and the world is said to be *without God*, then when he gathers a Church, *He calls them out of the world*; as Lot was called out of *Sodom*, which was ready to be destroyed with fire and brimstone: or as a man is called out from an house that is ready to fall into its ruines; and this it is that makes it to be such an admirable priviledge and blessedness to be of the Church. For the world is sure to *perish*, is sure to be *damned*; there is no *abiding therein*; as if an *Israelite* had continued in an *Egyptians* house, when the destroying Angel passed by, he was sure to be killed. Thus there is no way but of damnation in the world, without this Ark of the Church, every one must necessarily perish. But this is that which should make all our hearts ake and tremble at, to consider, That though the Church be called out of the world, yet it's almost degenerated into the world again. Look over the face and conversation of all Churches, Are they not become the world? Is not a garden made a wilderness? Is not the lusts, the prophaneness, the ignorance, the impieties that are in the world to be found in the Church likewise? And what hath been the sad occasion of so many to say, Our Congregations are no Churches, that a man cannot with a good conscience stay amongst you, or have communion with you? Is it not because of the universal impiety they see amongst us? As if the Church of God, which is like the Ark in other things were in this also, that all kind of things unclean, as well as clean, swine as well as sheep, vultures as well as doves, were to be taken into it. We see, as it hath been Gods work, to turn the world into Churches: so it hath been the Devils work to turn the Churches into the world again. But wo be to the wicked man, that is so in the Church of God, God will be sure to punish you! A nettle or weed in the garden is sure to be plucked up, whereas in the wilderness it may grow, and never be medled with.





## SERM. XIII.

## Concerning the Efficient, Instrumental, Formal and Final Cause of a Church.

2 COR. I. 1.

To the Church at Corinth.

Gods call as the efficient cause of the Church, is either external only, or external and internal also.

**W**E are describing the nature of a particular visible Church; and in that have discussed the *Efficient Cause*, with the manner of his efficiency, expressed in those words [*Called of God*] what is implied in that, hath been examined: only there remaineth a necessary distinction to be attended unto, of Gods call; that it is two-fold, either *External only*, or *External and Internal* also; or an *Effectual*, and *Ineffectual Calling*. For though this distinction be hated by some men, yet the Scripture is very clear, *That there are many called, who yet are not chosen*: and when he saith *called*, it is not meant only actively on Gods part, as some were called, but yet refused, and would not so much as outwardly profess obedience, but *called* is to be understood passively on mans part, so that he giveth some outward conformity to Gods call. There is an external reception, and submission to it, but yet there is no true inward sanctification: Inasmuch that some who are *called the children of the Kingdom shall be cast forth*; and they are said not to be *all Israel, who are of Israel*. In the Old Testament we read of many who outwardly submitted to the profession of Gods commands, who yet were not sound at heart; and therefore our Saviour in the course of his Ministry did not direct his preaching more to any subject almost then this, *viz.* to have the internals of grace, as well as externals; so that we may say, *There is a called and elected Church*, and a *called Church only not elected*; and this is to take off all Churches from idolizing and doting upon the Ordinances and external administrations which are in a Church, as the *Jews* did, and as most *Christians* do. We are to go further, and to see whether we be indeed and really Christs body, as well as seemingly. For if we do compare a Church called only, with the Church called and elected, and to the spiritual privileges that are promised; so our Divines use to say, *That it is but equivocally a Church*; they have no true acceptance with God. If there should be a Society professing faith in Christ, and have pure administrations, but not one in the Society having true real sanctifying grace; this Society in respect of God and Christ hath no true communion with them. They have but the name, not the nature, and so are *equivocally*, not *univocally* a true Church. For why should it be otherwise with a Society, then every member of it taken singly? Now it's certain in such a supposed Society, where all are professors, but not one member truly godly, there every individual person, notwithstanding all Church enjoyments, yet hath no lively interest in Christ, he is but as a glass eye or wooden leg in the body, that hath no vivifical nourishment, or is animated by the soul; and therefore such are said to be *De corpore Ecclesiae*, but not *de animâ*, if then this



this be true of every member of that Church, it must be also true of the Church taken collectively: Only this is true, if we consider such a company relatively to God. But then, if we consider them *quoad nos*, in respect of men, who cannot judge the hearts, nor know when true grace is in any mans soul, then such a Church, or a Society may be called truly a Church. For it is the external profession, and outward submission to Christs order, that doth make a Church visible to us; and therefore in such a Church, there are true Ordinances, true Administrations. And this is the rule we must go by in joyning our selves to a Church, and keeping external communion with it, if it be a called Church, though not elected, and be so farre orthodox and pure, that we may have communion with them without sinne. This is a Church to us, howsoever God may look upon them, *as having a name to live, but were dead*, as God said of *Sardis*, Rev. 3. 1. which yet was a Church. This distinction is of a two-fold use, to prevent two mistakes:

First, Of such, who confound an *external Church* with an *elected*, making Gods call, and his election in an equal latitude, thinking that because none but predestinated and truly sanctified men are of the invisible Church, therefore none but such are also of the visible. And then,

Secondly, Of those, who if they be of a Church, especially cleansed from superstitions and prophaneness; if the Church be a Reformed Church, they rest in those external administrations, and never attend to the work of grace indeed. For if among *Papists*, though so greatly polluted, yet the Church is made an Idol to them; no wonder if the Reformed Churches are prone to put confidence in Church-reformations, without attending to internal sanctification. But the Apostle tells us, *Gal. 6. 15. That in Christ Jesus neither circumcision, or uncircumcision availeth any thing, but a new creature*, that is, no externals in the Church of God, though of his own institution avail any thing without regeneration. Therefore rest not in this, that you are called of God, that ye are his Church; for many taken out of his Church, shall be damned, as well as out of the world; yea more in the Church, that is, the visible Society professing of Christ, will be damned then saved, as appeareth by that expression twice repeated by our Saviour, as being of so great concernment, being worthy to be heard again and again, *Many are called, but few are saved*, Mat. 22. 14. and 20. 16. And thus much of the *Efficient Cause*, with the manner [*Called of God.*]

In the next place, There is the *Instrumental Cause*, and that is *by the preaching of the Word*. For so we read upon Christs giving his Apostles commission to reach and preach to all Nations, there were Churches gathered in every place. And this is to be understood of the ordinary way. For whether the Word even as read, may not in some extraordinary cases be a means to bring some one person or more to the Church of God, is not here to be disputed: for we speak of the solemn, ordinary, instituted means of God, and so there is no other way but the preaching of the Word. Hence *Rom. 10. 14, 15.* you see there a concatenation and chaining of calling upon God, and believing together; of believing and hearing together, and of hearing and the Ministry together.

But it's objected by the *Socinians*, *That if the preaching of the Word be an instrument to gather a Church, then it cannot be a note of the Church. For that which is antecedent to a Church, and is before the Church is, cannot be a note of it.*

To this we may answer, That it is both an instrument to gather a Church, and then a note of it, when gathered; neither is there any absurdity therein. It's true, that very numerical preaching, which at first made the Church, cannot be a mark or note of it, but the same specifical preaching, or that which is like it, that doth truly declare where the true Church is. So that by this we may see, the dignity and usefulness of the Ministry; for by that God is pleased to raise up

The instrumental cause of the Church is the preaching of the Word.



all the Churches that are in the world. God who did immediatly create the world, and used no instruments, yet in planting of his Church doth, and therefore they are workers with him, 2 Cor. 6. 1. Neither is the Ministry only necessary to constitute a Church, and then afterwards useles, as *Episcopius* saith. Where people have the Scriptures, there the Ministry is of no necessity. Yea the *Soci-nians* make it only a matter of order and conveniency. For Ministers are not only appointed to gather Churches at first, but when they are planted, continually to water them. Therefore *Ephes. 4.* their usefulness is shewed even to constituted Churches; *For the further building them up, even till they come to a full stature in Christ.* And therefore the Apostles thought it not enough to make Churches, to erect new spiritual Societies, that should profess Christ; but Elders were to be ordained in every Church, that were to have constant residence amongst them, and to give them daily food, watching over their souls, and therefore their title of *Shepherds*, and the people being called a *Flock*, do evidently demonstrate the necessity of a Ministry not only at first, as miracles were, but perpetually even to the coming of Christ.

The formal cause, the solemn observation of Church communion. Wherein consisteth the nature of Church communion.

Thirdly, There is in the Description, the *Formal Cause*, to which also may be reduced the *Final Cause*. The *Formal Cause* is in the publick, and solemn observation of that *Church-communion* which God hath required. I shall only mention that formal and external Communion, wherein it consists: And that is,

1. *In the solemn assembling and meeting of themselves together, Heb. 10. 25.* The Apostle doth there reprove the neglect of this duty, which is the seminary and fountain of all holiness; while the coals lie together they keep their heat, and inflame one another. Thus it's our communion in the Assemblies that is the means to keep up grace and holiness. How much did *David* bewail his banishment from the Ordinances, as you heard? And is it not the highest censure, and most dreadfull punishment that can be, for a Christian upon just grounds to be cast out of the Church? Is not this to fall into the Kingdom of Satan? Is it not to be delivered up to him? Now then, if it be next to hell it self, thus to be cast out of *Church-communion* and the publick Ordinances, Why dost thou wilfully bring this upon thy self? Thy own slothfull, and prophane careless heart makes thee neglect the publick Assemblies. This is a sinne of an higher nature than thou art aware of, for God is present in Church Assemblies, you have the benefit of the prayers then poured forth; the Ordinances are of enlightning and quickning efficacy. Now for thee voluntarily to deprive thy self of this spiritual advantage, is a sinne of an high degree. Indeed when want of health, or other just impediments keep us from the Assemblies, God can then make up the publick benefits in private. But I speak of a voluntary, wilfull omission of such publick *Communion*. Oh little do such men consider, that they have but a day! Their life is but a day, and the season of grace is but a day; and dost thou neglect that day, when it may be, thou shalt never have such a day again, never have a Sabbath any more? That carnal plea also of getting as much good at home, and they can edifie themselves as well with reading books in private, unless in case of necessity (as I said) is an ungodly and unjustifiable excuse; for this is to make Church-communion, and holy Assemblies to be of no necessity, and so wholly to overthrow them.

2. In this solemn meeting there are these publick duties, wherein the Church is to imploy her self.

1. *Publick prayer to God.* This in the primitive times was done so fervently and zealously, that they did even seem to besiege Heaven, and to take it by force. Oh what prevailing power must the Church have with God, when they are so many wrestling *Jacobs*! If the effectual fervent prayer of one righte-



ous man prevaileth much, how much more shall we be joyned together? If it were a Congregation of *Job*, how mightily should we prevail with God? But we must not be like *Chrysostome*, *How are all the grave and holy things of God* *lost by formality, and a shew?* How many in our Congregation attend to this publick duty of prayer? They fear not, lest they should be so many *in the Congregation*. So that for thy deadness, *the sinnes thou art in*, God be angry with our Assemblies, and will not be graciously patient with us. Thou art a dead flie in this box of ointment. The prophane man little thinketh what obstructions he makes in our publick petitions, by his wickedness unrepented of.

2. There is the *publick preaching of the Word*; And this necessarily supposeth a formed and stated Church, wherein are Governours and governed. Those who by Office preach, and those who by duty hear. This publick Ministry in the Church of God, is not for convenience, or good order meerly, but it is an institution of Christ, and hath severall effects attributed to it, as conversion of such who are in their natural condition, the edifying of those who are converted; for instruction, that men be not led aside with errors and strange Doctrine; for rebuke and reproof of such who walk disorderly, &c. And therefore because of the necessity of it, those who have commission to do it, have manifold directions about it, *To preach in season and out of season*; and the reason seemeth strange, *Because there are many, who will not endure sound Doctrine*, 2 Tim. 4. 2. Yea, there is a wo to them, if they be negligent herein, 1 Cor. 9. 16. And in all this they are to be instant and industrious, it being a cursed thing to do *the work of the Lord negligently*. The matter they preach, must be holy, savoury and nourishing, compared therefore to food: You are to come to a Sermon with an hungry stomach. Yea, as *new born children*, ye are to swallow down *the sincere milk of the Word*. And therefore to preach froth and meer fancifull things is as absurd, as if a man should invite another to a dinner, and provide him nothing but the pictures of some meat. It's compared to seed; the Husbandman will not sow his ground with chaff: Yea, it's compared to a *two-edged sword*, *that is quick and piercing into the very secret thoughts of mens hearts*. It is for want of such soul-piercing and soul-saving preaching, that people are lulled, or sleep in their sinnes; that there is nothing but formality and customariness in most men. The word of God is to flash in your faces like so much lightning, and to make even the proudest and the most scornfull to tremble within them. *They must speak as the Oracles of God*. What is that, but as men filled with the Spirit of God, breaking out like fire from them? And with such proportionable affections are you to hear: This is to meet as the Church of God, no man sleeping, no man drousie, or wandering, and roving in his mind; but to say with the Centurion, *We are all here, to hear what God will say to us*.

3. The Administration of Sacraments according to Gods order, and such holy wayes as he hath appointed. The Sacraments are of infinite consequence to the Church of God; and when people through their ignorance and prophane-ness make themselves unfit subjects, they are enemies to their souls. For though God be present in the Word and prayer, yet his sacramental presence is in a more indeared and peculiar manner.

Lastly, There is that godly Discipline, and holy Order in Church-communion, which is as the hedge to the field of corn. Take away this holy order, the Church will become a gangrened body, either with heresies or prophane-ness. Hence is that binding and losing of sinners: Hence is that command of *casting out wicked obstinate persons*, of *purging out the old leaven*, because



because a little leaven will quickly sour all, 1 Cor. 5. Hence also are those duties of admonishing, and noting such as go astray, and the turning from those that walk disorderly, 2 Thess. 3. These several acts of Church Discipline commanded in the Scripture, are very evident. And although there are a generation of men, who would with scorn and pride cry it down, as lordly and Popish, and I know not what; yet at last it will be found, that that it was only their lusts and love to sinne, their hatred of sinne, their hatred of powerfull godliness, which provoketh them hereunto. What would they have said, if they had lived in *Tertullians*, *Cyprians*, *Chrysostomes* and *Austin's* dayes, when there was such zeal in Church Discipline against all prophaneness, that in some things they were immoderately severe? If then this be the external form of Church-communion, if in these things Church Assemblies are to be exercised, let us mourn for our general Apostasie, that in some sense our Church Assemblies have been like the world at first, a meer chaos and confusion: Not that ever any Church will be so reformed, as that it will not need further Reformation: But only let us endeavour to attain what degree of purity may be had.



## SERM. XIV.

### *Of the Notes and Signes of a true Church.*

2 COR. I. I.

*To the Church at Corinth, &c.*

**Y**OU have heard what is to be understood by this expression of a Church. The true Doctrine about this being so necessary, I shall further enlarge my self, not entring into the whole Common-place of a Church: for that would be too prolix, and ere this Epistle be ended, we may happily meet with more Texts, that may afford further knowledge in this point. Only I shall after the popular definition of a Church, give you the Notes, or Marks, whereby we may come to know, what is, or where is the true Church. For this hath been a great controversie between Papists, and us.

*Object.*

There are indeed some of late, as the *Remonstrants* *Episcopians*, &c. who say, *This dispute and enquiry about the marks of a Church, is wholly uselesse and needlesse. For (say they) either we have to do with an Infidel, or a Believer; if with an Infidel, it is absurd to tell him of the Notes of a Church, who doth not believe there is any such thing as a Church at all. And for a Believer, he is in the Church already, and so they are uselesse to him.* But this is meerly frivolous. For

*Ans.*

Why needfull to know the Marks of a true Church.

1. When we have to do with an unbeliever, we must not in the first place deal with him about a Church, to prove that we are the true Church, but that there is a God, who is to be worshipped, as natural light will convince of this. Then, that this God hath made known how he will be worshipped. Next, that the Scriptures do contain this revealed will of God. And when this foundation is laid, then out of Gods Word we are to inform him



him of a Church. So that in order, there is, first, The Word of God to be discovered: 2. What is the true sense and meaning of it. Lastly, That what society hath this, there is a true Church. And

Secondly, Even Heathens by hearing of the Word preached, have by the Grace of God been converted, and so the Word preached, which was at first instrumental to convert them, doth afterwards by way of a sign or mark, confirm them therein. The Apostle tells us of an unbeliever, coming into Church-meetings, who is so wrought upon, that he crieth out, *Verily God is here*, 1 Cor. 14. 25.

And as to the Believer the notes of a Church are necessary, for the further confirming and establishing of him. For seeing that every Party or Sect saith, *They are the true Church, and with them onely is Communion to be had, condemning other meetings, as false, as the Synagogue of Satan, and as necessarily damning all those that continue in that Communion different from them*: It is thereby of great use, that we should have such Notes or Marks, to conclude that where such are, certainly there is a Church; for we are not to be *Scaptricks* or *Seekers*. When the Scripture commands us, *To tell the Church*, Mat. 18. *To conjoyn our selves to the Church of God*, it plainly intimateth, that such a Society may be known. Even as there was a Star to guide the Wisemen unto Christ.

In the second place, There are three things necessary to make a Note, or a Mark of a Church.

What things necessary to make a Note or Mark.

1. It must be *more known than the thing it self*.
2. It must be *proper and peculiar to that thing alone, of which it is a Note*. For if it be common to others, it cannot be a Note. Sense is not a Note of a man, because it's common to a beast. And
- Lastly, *It must be inseparable*. For if it doth not alwayes agree to it, then we cannot tell how to discern that we look for.

Now for such Notes of the Church, the Protestants say, there are these three only.

What are the Notes of a true Church.

1. The *pure preaching of the Word*, with the publick receiving and professing of it.
2. The *right and orderly administration of the Sacraments*.
3. The *due use of holy Order and Discipline*. Where these things are, there we may conclude, that certainly Gods true Church is, and with such a Society we may lawfully joyn.

Thirdly, Only when we give these three Notes, we do not make all of the same equal necessity. *Discipline* and *holy Order* is for the well-being of a Church. This Church of *Corinth* was a Church, though that was neglected. It is true, this is greatly to be pressed for, and the introducing of Christs order into a Church, is like the bringing of the Ark into *Obed-Edoms* family. So that without this, manifest impiety being suffered, God will be so highly provoked, as to give a Bill of Divorce to it, and take away his Gospel from such an unworthy people; yet this is not made essential to the being of a Church. So also the *administration of Sacraments*. There was a time, when the Church had none, viz. before Circumcision was appointed; but since Christs appointment of them, there they ought to be used, where the way and manner he hath appointed can be attained. For the dispensers of those holy Mysteries must take heed, *That they give not pearl to swine*, nor encourage prophane men in their impieties, by giving them the testimonies of Gods love, whom yet he abhorreth. Therefore that which is infallibly necessary, and alwayes accompanying a true Church, is the *preaching of the Word* in a right manner, *with the publick receiving and profession of this*. I adde, *the publick profession*; because the Word may be purely taught to a people, who yet are not the Church, because they do



refuse and reject the Gospel tendered to them, as the *Jews* did, and many Heathens; so that there must be a manifest and publick profession of it. And besides the true preaching of the Word is only a sign of a true Minister, not of a true Church, unless they give their consent thereunto. So that when our Divines say, *The pure preaching of the Word is a Note of the Church*; They include and suppose the *publick receiving of it by the people*; yea some do clearly expresse it. By this pure and true preaching of the Word, we may discern the true Church from *Jews* and *Pagans*, as also from Heretical and Idololatrical Societies, yet pretending to a Church.

Fourthly, When these Notes, especially the former, are said to be *proper and inseparable to the Church of God*: You must alwayes remember here is a latitude in the application of these Notes. For some Churches may have the Word more soundly preached, and the Sacraments more dispensed than another, and yet for all that not to be denied to be Churches. This Church of *Corinth* was foully out of order: And so most of those Churches in *Asia* were sharply reprov'd, yet they did not cease to be a Church. Yea the *Church of Israel* had many corruptions both in worship and life, yet it was a long while ere God did cast her off. So that we must not for some defilements either in the Doctrine, Worship or Manners of a Church, presently deny her to be a Church, and separate from her, for this is against Scripture information. Yea, there is no Church so perfect, but needeth some Reformation. They may build hay and stubble, though they keep the foundation. So that he must go out of the world, that would live in a Church, where nothing is amiss. Even that Church of *Smyrna* the Apostle mentioneth, *Revel. 2. 8.* that was as her Name, signifying sweet smelling, and fragrant like a Garden, or bed of Spices, yet she was troubled with some, who said, *They were Jews, but were not, but were of the Synagogue of Satan.* But of this more, when we come to the next Doctrine.

Fifthly, These then being the visible Marks of a visible Church, we must not confound them with the properties of the Church invisible. The Church of God hath as it were a two-fold *Form*; one *Internal* and *Essential*, which consists in their Union with Christ, and communion with his benefits. Now none but those that are truly godly are of the Church in this invisible manner, he must be regenerated and grafted into Christ, that can have any saving benefit by Christ. But then,

2. The Church of God hath an *External* and *outward Form*, which consists in the external profession of faith, and observance of Christs Ordinances. Now a man may be of the Church in respect of this outward standing, though he be not truly godly. Therefore Dr *Ames* said well, That it was a false thing, which *Bellarmino* objected to us, about the constitution of a Church, as if we required internal graces, to the making of a man a member of the Church, in respect of the visible state of it. We read in the New Testament, that upon the outward profession of their faith, they were baptized, and received into the Church, though it's plain all of them had not true internal grace. So then, when the Question is put, *Whether may a man that is not truly godly, be of the Church or no?* You must distinguish between the *inward form* of the Church, which is union with Christ the Head, and so he is not, no more than a wooden leg is a member of the body, that is not animated by the soul, and the *External visible state* of it, and so he is of the Church, till by his obstinacy in wickedness, he be cast out as unworthy. We must not therefore give those Notes of the Church as visible, which belong to it only as invisible, *viz. Election, Vocation, and Justification, &c.*

Sixthly, The *Papist* to avoid this extream, he giveth such Marks of a Church,



Church, as favour rather of worldly ambition and pride. Yea the true Church of God many times is known by the contrary Marks; they give amplitude and universality, as also temporal felicity. Now this is rather a Description of some worldly Monarchy than Gods Church. For, as for the Churches amplitude, though absolutely in it self, it may be sometimes nutherous, yet at other times it hath been brought into a narrow compasse. *Elijah* thought none was left, and God speaks of but *seven thousand that did not bow the knee to Baal*, which was a very inconsiderable number to the Idolaters. Therefore respectively to the wicked of the world, even when they are most ample, they are but a little flock. And as for any glorious felicity, though the Church of God hath sometimes had her respite and halcyon dayes, yet for the most part a crown of thorns hath been on her head; and therefore she is justly called, the *Militant Church*, while in this world, because of her spiritual conflict with all sorts of enemies. So that the Church of Christ may sometimes say, as Christ once did, *The Foxes have their holes, and the Birds of the air their nests, but the Sonne of man hath not where to lay his head*. Thus the Foxes of the world, the crafty subtil men have great abundance many times, when the Church hath hid her self in the wilderness. And Fowls of the air, men of proud and lofty minds, have their nests; when the Church like *Noah's Dove*, hath not where to set her foot.

Seventhly, I shall not enlarge my self to prove these only to be the proper Notes of the Church, only consider that place, *Act. 2. 41, 42.* where you have all of them conjoynd together: 1. *They received the Word gladly.* There is a solemn profession of it. 2. *There is the administration of the Sacraments;* They were baptized, and continued in breaking of bread, with prayers. There is the solemn calling upon God. And as an epitomizing of all this it's said, *Then were added unto the Church about three thousand souls.* Thus *1 Tim. 3. 15.* the Church is called, *The pillar and foundation of the truth*, that is, by the Ministeries preservation of it, and the peoples submitting unto it.

Lastly, If to this it be objected, as *Socinians* do, who hold this way of Notes to find out a Church, to be useles and vain, That true Doctrine cannot be a sign of the Church, because it's the *Form and Essence* of it. Now that which notifieth the essence of a thing, must be distinct from it. To this it is answered, That the form, as it giveth being to a thing, so it giveth to distinguish from others, *Forma dat esse, & distingui.* Although we do not say, True Doctrine is the Note of a Church, but the external preaching, and receiving of it, that is a Note, incurring into our senses: Even as *Reason*, though it give a man his rational being, yet speaking is the proper and true sign, that manifests this: So let true Doctrine, or a true faith be the soul and life of a Church, yet the external profession is the outward Note and Sign of it. And if further it be said, *That every Sect doth claim to it self the pure preaching of the Word, and the right administration of Ordinances;* Therefore these cannot be a sign. It's answered, The consequence is denied, for true preaching and confession is a sign, although Hereticks pretend thereunto. As true Miracles were a sure Argument to prove the truth, although others have done, and Antichrist will pretend to true Miracles. And indeed, though all Sects, as the *Socinians* especially, pretend much to the Scripture, yet it is not the words only, but the sense of it, that is by the Context and Scope to be discovered, that is the word of God. Therefore *Irenaeus* of old said elegantly, *That Hereticks making the Scripture to speak what sense they pleased, did as if a man should take the Statue, or Image of a King, and so transpose the*

How the form  
of a thing may  
be a Note or  
Mark of it.



parts of it, as to make it the image of a Dog, or some other vile thing.

These things concluded on, let us draw some Uses by way of Corollaries. As

1. In that the holy Ghost is pleased to appropriate this Word in the New Testament to his people, which among the Heathens signifieth the meaner sort of people; for that they called *Ecclesia*, and it was opposite to *βουλή*, the Senate, which consisted of more noble men. Hence we may see, who they are that are most commonly called to be of his Church, even the meaner sort, *Not many rich, not many noble hath God called*, 1 Corin. 1. We should not despise the Church of God, if it be not so externally pompous and glorious as Kingdoms and States. For Christ is more peculiarly present with his Church, and shed his blood for that.

2. That if we speak properly, the Church is not a material place, nor this building of stones and wood, but the people of God meeting there. Indeed it may tropically be well enough, called a *Church*, as *Synagogue* is applied to the place, *He built us a Synagogue*, whereas properly it signifieth the people meeting together, as you heard. Thus *Concis* amongst the Latines, signifieth both the place, and the company met together. *Bellarmine* would have the word to signifie a place, 1 Cor. 11. as also where it is said, *Let the woman keep silence in the Churches*. And those learned men *Fuller* and *Mede* expound it so in 1 Cor. 11. But there is no necessity of such Interpretation. But though the Scripture doth not call it so, we may by a Trope give it that name, and use must authorize in these things. Though *Isidore Pelusiota* in one of his Epistles, sharply reproving a Bishop, that adorned the material place with Images and Ornaments, but neglected the Church of God, the true professors he persecuted, doth call the people *ἐκκλησία*, and the place *ἐκκλησιαστήριον*.

Lastly, Is it a Church, a company called by God? Then this sheweth of what consequence Unity and Concord is amongst all the Members thereof. How can a body be kept together without ligaments and nerves? How can the building stand, if the wood and straw be not aptly fastned and cemented together? How can the Church subsist, if there be not Love, Union and Concord? It's observable, *Phil. 4. 2.* that the Apostle thought it not too low a thing, even in canonical Scripture, to intreat two women that were at difference to be of the same mind, *I beseech Euodias, I beseech Syntyche, that they be of one mind*. Two godly women differing, the Apostle doth passionately intreat reconciliation and agreement, how much more then would he have intreated the Pastors and Officers in the Church, to take heed of discord?





SERM. XV.

*Why Paul writeth to the Church, not the Churches of Corinth. What is implied in the Churches being called the Church of God.*

2 COR. I. 1.

*To the Church of God, which is at Corinth, &c.*

**T**He Nature of a Church hath been considered, with the Marks thereof, from the name ἐκκλησία given here to the Society of believers at Corinth. So that we might dispatch this, only in that the word Church is used in the singular number, *The Church at Corinth*, not *Churches*. It's disputed, *What one Church it was*; whether one single Congregation exercising all Church-government within it self; or a combined and collective Church, united into one, but consisting of particular Congregations: and it may seem probable, that this Church of Corinth was a combined or associated Church, partly because Act. 18. we may read of much people that God had in that place; and therefore Paul staid above a year there, which argued a multitude of converts. The plenty also of their Teachers and Officers, with the diversitie of tongues. And lastly, in that 1 Cor. 16. 19. Aquila and Priscilla are mentioned, with the Church in their house. It is true, what is meant by the Church in an house is controverted; we find the expression four times in Scripture, Rom. 16. 15. where Aquila and Priscilla are saluted, with the Church in their house. So 1 Cor. 16. 19. these persons are mentioned again with the Church in their house. Col. 4. 15. There one Nymphas is saluted with the Church in his house. Phil. 2. There likewise Philemon is mentioned, with the Church in his house. Mr. Mede doth from hence inferre, That even in the Apostles dayes, and so in the primitive times, that the Christians had publick places, fixed and settled, being set apart for the publick Assemblies to worship God in, answering those places of Arnobius and others, who told the Heathens they had no Temple, nor Ara; he saith, these mentioned in the Texts named, did set apart, some piece of their house for that end. But it should seem by other passages, that in the Apostles dayes there were no fixed places for to meet in. Therefore sometimes they meet in one house, and sometimes in another; yea, *They went from house to house*. Others they think, by the Church in their house, is meant many believers. For they say, Whereas when other families are saluted, only some are named; sometimes the Master of the house is omitted, as, *Salute the household of Narcissus*, because he was thought to be an infidel. Yea, Calvin thinketh, it is that infamous and wicked Narcissus, so notorious



notorious wicked, and great with *Negro*, of whom Historians speak. Now when the Apostle salutes the men, and the *Church in their house*, it was, because there were no unbelievers, but all were of the Church. Howsoever it be, it's plain there were many believers in that family more than ordinary, and therefore called a Church, which should argue, That the Church of *Corinth* was a combined Church. That passage also makes it likely, 1 Cor. 14. 34. *Let your women be silent in the Churches: Your women*] therefore he speaks of the *Corinthians* there, who are said to have *Churches*; and yet here it is called a *Church*.

This will still appear the more likely, if we consider, that here were believing *Jews*, as well as *Gentiles* in this *Church of Corinth*, as *Estius* observeth in the Preface to the first Epistle. Therefore when the Apostle speaketh of some, who said they were of *Cephas*, that relateth to the believing *Jews*; yet because they were few comparatively to the *Gentiles*, therefore the Apostle writeth to them, as if all were *Gentiles*, as *Chap. 12. 2. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away to dumb Idols, &c.* Hence the same Author saith, That it was one Church collected of all the believers in that place, *Licet esse potuerint in eadem civitate distincta, ut ita dicam parochia.* As for the notion of a learned man, That the *Jewish* believers, and *Gentile* believers did make two distinct Churches, and had two distinct Bishops, which he thinketh would salve some seeming contradictions in Ecclesiastical History, that being of an heterogeneous nature to my purpose, I passe it by.

Thus also the *Church of Jerusalem* is called a *Church*, which yet by many probable Arguments seemeth to be more than one. Neither may we think, that Christ hath invested one single Congregation (ordinarily) with all Church power. For that president and example of a Council or Synod, mentioned *Act. 15.* doth inform, That there are to be *Synods*, not only by way of advice, but by power, and that over particular Churches.

We proceed to the next thing considerable in this description of the Church, and that is the efficient Cause, the *Church of God*. This distinguisheth the Church from all civil and meer political Assemblies. For, though the *Earth be the Lords, and the fulness thereof*; yet the Church is the Lords in a more peculiar and appropriated manner. Sometimes the Church is named absolutely without any addition, as when *Paul* is said to persecute the Church. Sometimes it's restrained to the place. Thus the Church of *Ephesus*, the Church of *Laodicea*, but most commonly, it is the Church of God, or the Church of Christ. Sometimes both are put together, as 1 *Thes. 1. 1. To the Church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ.* So also 2 *Thess. 1. 1.* And certainly, if so be the Apostle considering us meerly as creatures, maketh use of, and sanctifieth that of the Poet, *For we are his off-spring*, how much more is it true of us, as members of a Church. Observe,

*That a Church is Gods people in a more peculiar and special manner.*

A Church is  
Gods people  
in a more special  
manner  
than others.

Though he be the God of the world, yet in a more special manner he is a God of his Church. The consideration of this truth, may tend much to our spiritual edification. For if we are of God, how much should it humble us to see any thing amongst us, that is of sin or the Devil? Is ignorance or prophaneness of God? so, are humane superstitions of God?

But to open this, let us consider what is implied in this, when a Church is said to be the *Church of God*.

First therefore, this sheweth, That a Church is a *supernatural Society*, it's a spi-



spiritual company of men. So that a Church is not like a civil Corporation, or like Kingdoms and Commonwealths, which are by meer humane Institution and agreement, though Magistracy it self it be of God, but are supernatural; and therefore it's called the *Kingdom of Heaven*, and *Jerusalem which is from above*; so the Church is called *Gal. 4. 26.* even while it is here on Earth, before it is *triumphant* in Heaven. Now the Church is a *supernatural Society* many wayes, in which respect it may be called the Church of God in a more eminent manner. For in respect of its *Efficient*, so God alone is the author of it, called therefore *Ecclesia*, because God by his Word calls them from their Heathenish Idolatries and practises, making of them a Church. Thus the people of *Corinth*, when they were securely indulging themselves in all manner of impieties, having no thoughts or desires to be a Church, God by *Paul* calls them to be one. Even as God by his breath, caused the dry bones to gather together, and to live; or as at the day of Judgment, God by the voice of an *Arch-angel*, will raise the dead in the grave who have no life or sense in them. Thus it's the Lord that made Churches every where in the preaching of the Gospel. It was the gracious work of God that found us out in *Britain*, and made a Church to himself, so that we are *loca inaccessa* to the grace of God and his Spirit, though to humane power. It is true indeed, God is the God of the world, he created Heaven and Earth with all therein; yet though God did thus immediately create the world at first, we do not say the creatures therein are Gods grace, or that they have a supernatural being. For it's not enough to make a thing grace or supernatural, that God doth immediately create it, but that his power be in a peculiar and extraordinary manner, and that for supernatural effects and ends. Oh therefore, how greatly should we be affected with the grace and power of God in creating to himself a Church out of the world? He might have no more made a Church here, or there in the Earth, then he did in Hell; and he that at first planted a curious Garden, and put man therein, is much more wonderfull in making of a Church to himself; yet how brutish and earthly are we? We can blesse God for the world, and the comforts thereof, that the Earth brings forth food for us, that we have the Air to breath in, the glorious Sunne to be a daily light to us, yet we are not thus affected with Church-mercies and Church-ordinances. *David* indeed upon the former consideration, cried out, *Lord, what is man, that thou art thus mindfull of him, &c?* But we may much rather from these supernatural respects.

Secondly, It's supernatural, in respect of the *purchase given for them*, the price paid to make them the Lords. For you must know, upon *Adams* fall all mankind was *excommunicated*, *unchurched*, as it were; and therefore cast out from Paradise, and Gods gracious presence: and hence it is, that we are said *naturally to be without God*; yea the Devil is said to be *the god of the world*. Thus untill God makes us a Church, we are under the power of Satan wholly; and therefore to be cast out of the Church, is to be delivered to Satan. Thus then being fallen off from the Lord, and now become the Devils, in whom he reigneth, we could not be purchased from this thralldom, but by the death of Christ; and therefore we are called the *Church of Christ*, as well as of God, because though conquered by Gods Spirit, yet we are bought by his blood; and this the Apostle urgeth, *That therefore we are none of our own*, but are to live to him. We are to be his *peculiar people*, *zealous of good works*, *Tit. 2. 15.* Thus it cost more to be Gods Church, then to be the world at first; for he *spake*, and it was made, but here, Christ died, and so it was purchased. What a powerfull ingagement is this, for all of a Church to walk holily? What did Christ die, that you should wallow in the filth of your sins? What will you deny the



*the Lord that bought you?* If thou wilt be ignorant, and prophane, Why doest thou not go out from the Church of God? Why doest thou not turn *Heathen and Pagan* again? For certainly the Churches of Christ have no such prophane customs.

Thirdly, It's supernatural, and of God, in respect of *the Order, Laws, Rule and Government it is to walk by*. The Doctrine believed is revealed by God. The Worship practised is to be appointed by God. The Government and Order is to be commanded by God. And thus, Beloved, we might at large shew you, That all things that are essential in the Church, are to be of God. No Doctrine, no Worship, no Administration of Sacraments, but what is of God. We might shew you, what God hath appointed in the *Credendis*, and *Agendis Ecclesie*. Oh that this were well understood by us! What makes men so wilfull for their lusts, for their superstitious customs, but because they consider not the *Church is a spiritual house*, and the Laws and Orders thereof are appointed by Christ himself? If the Church be of God, all things therein must be of God likewise. Hence our Saviour saith, *Every plant that is not of my Fathers planting, shall be rooted out*, Mat. 15. 13. What makes men rage and fret, if things in the Church be not according to their own humours and lusts? Is it not because they do not attend to this, *That it is Gods Church?* It's not the Popes Church, nor the Magistrates Church, but *Gods Church*. Surely this truth would make us in all things ask, as Christ did in another case, *Whose image and superscription hath it? Give unto God the things that are Gods*.

Fourthly, It's supernatural, and of God, even in respect of the *manner of doing all things in the Church*. Every solemn duty is to be done as from God, and through him, even in an holy and divine manner. The Minister must preach, as inabled of God: The hearer must hear, as strengthened thereunto of God. The Apostle praiseth the *Thessalonians*, That *they received the Word, not as the word of man, but of God*. As the Apostle speaks of his administration of the Gospel, 2 Cor. 2. 17. *As of God in the sight of God*, so ought all our Church-assemblies to be performed. What *Jeremiah* then hath his head full enough of water to make lamentation for the formality, customariness, and meer external service that is done to God in our Assemblies? Men are become like *Idols*, *having eyes they see not, ears they hear not, hearts they understand not*, whereas our praying, our hearing, our approachings in these Assemblies should be as of God; not Nature, or Custom, or the Laws of men, but the Spirit of God mightily working in us, should put us upon these things: Whereas now we see people in Church-assemblies, finding no more of the gracious power and presence of God, then if they were in their markets, or other civil meetings. As the Apostle said, *Do ye seek an experiment of Christ in me?* So ought it to be here, we are to demonstrate in our Church-assemblies, experimental works of Christ upon us. As the duty is of God, the Ordinance is of God, so should the frame, and disposition of our hearts be of God.

Fifthly, The Church is of God in respect of his *protection and gracious presence*. God promiseth his presence, and *delights to be in the Assembly of his Saints*, Matth. 18. 20. *When two or three are gathered together in my Name, I will be in the midst of them*. It's the gracious presence of God that bleisseth Ordinances. Hence Christ is described, Revel. 1. 13. *Walking in the midst of the golden Candlesticks*, that is, the Churches, and the Ordinances therein. We are apt to complain, if Gods blessing goeth not along with us in outward undertakings: We can say, as *Moses* to God, *If thy presence go not along with us, we will not go up*. When it may relate to our outward advantage; but we do not take notice of Gods presence in the



the Assemblies, why God is not amongst us to hear our prayers, why God is not present with the Word to make it an enlightning, a converting Word. It should affect your hearts more than it doth, if in every Sermon, the Spirit of God hath not fallen upon thy heart like fire; if it hath not melted, quickned, enlivened thy soul. Oh say, why did God withdraw himself, if he visited the hearts of others, yet not mine? I was dead, lukewarm, and found no efficacy come from Christ. What sins am I guilty of? What have I done that makes God thus absent himself from the publick Ordinances at least to me?

Sixthly, The Church is of God, in respect of all the *supernatural Effects* and benefits, which alone are communicated there. In the Church of God alone is *Justification, Sanctification, Assurance of his favour*; In the pool of *Bethesda* onely did the Angel come in. In the waters of *Jordan* only could *Naaman* be healed. In the Ark only could there be external safety from the waters: And thus in the Church only there are those soul-mercies to be obtained.

Lastly, The Church is of God *finaliter*, *Because the enjoyment of God is the proper end of all Churches*. It's true, all civil societies are to make the glory of God their ultimate end; but yet the immediate end, is to acquire a temporal and political blessedness; but the end of Gods Church is more transcendent and spiritual, for therefore are preaching, hearing; therefore are Sabbaths, and our solemn Assemblies, that we might have more enjoyment of God, that our doubts may be answered, our corruptions mortified, our graces made more fervent and zealous. This made *David* so esteem the Tabernacle of the Lord, and *desiring rather to be a door-keeper there*, then to have any earthly greatness. What was it the material Tabernacles that *David* so longed for? No, it was the enjoyment of God in those Ordinances. But as little children admire the fine out-side of some excellent Book, when they understand not the excellent matter contained therein; so saith *Chrysostome*, many regard the out-sides, and externals of religious duties, not knowing at all, what the spiritual effects thereof mean. Oh then let ignorant and wicked men tremble! If the Church be of God, how comest thou to be of the Devil, and to do his works?





## SERM, XVI.

Of the City of Corinth. God sometimes gathers  
a Church amongst the most prophane people.  
A Church, though many wayes defiled, may  
be a Church still, as it was with the Corin-  
thians.

2 COR. I. 1.

To the Church of God, which is at Corinth.

**T**He next thing to be treated of, is the Description of this Church by the place where it is, viz. at Corinth. And that we may understand the great grace and power of God in gathering a Church to himself out of this City; it's good to observe, what the Learned speak of it. It was called so (they say) from *Corinthus* the sonne of *Orestes*, or of *Pelops*; but when they had in a dishonourable manner abused some *Roman* Embassadors; they were destroyed by a *Roman* named *Lucius Mummius*, who from his victory over them was called *Corinthisiacus*; but *Augustus* taking delight in the place restored it, and sent a Colony thither to inhabit it. And it's plain by *Acts* 18. that they were then under a *Roman* called *Gallio* their *Proconsul*. It was the chief Town or *Metropolis* of *Achaia*; and because of the two Havens there, famous for Traffick, and thereby abounding in all wealth and riches. These things are observed in it:

1. It was notable for *learning and knowledge*. *Periander* one of the seven wise men, is said to be of it; and therefore *Cicero* calleth it, *Totius Graciae lumen*.

2. It was famous for *wealth and riches*, especially their Brasse called *Corinthiacum* was esteemed better than gold or silver, of which *Josephus* speaketh sometimes. *Augustus* did so delight in dishes made of it, that he was called *Corinthiarus*. Their buildings also were very curious and glorious; insomuch that *Tirinus* quoteth out of *Vitruvius*, that it was an ambition to build houses *formâ Corinthiacâ*. But

Lastly, That which is commonly the consequent of wealth and plenty, they were infamous for uncleanness and wantonness. For there was a Temple to *Venus*, where were a thousand Maids, besides others set apart to be prostituted, which was accounted so glorious, that thereby they could the better advance themselves in Marriage. Here also they adored the Heathenish god of all uncleanness called *Cothys*. Insomuch that *Κοινοδραζειν*, saith *Suidas*, is as much as to be wanton, to be lascivious. To *corinthize* was as much as much as to be unchast. Here *Demosthenes* is said to refuse that whore, which demanded so great a price for the carnal knowledge of her, saying,



ing, *Tanti poenitentiam non etiam*; and because their abominable uncleanness was at so dear a rate; therefore (say some) came that Proverb, *Nobis cuius datur adire Corinthum*; though *Suidas* and others, understand it of the difficulty of reaching into the Haven; and it should seem that after many were turned Christians, yet they were very prone to this bodily filthiness; and therefore in no Epistles doth the Apostle so industriously set himself against fornication as in this; and here was that abominable uncleanness committed even amongst them, while a Church, *That was not so much as named amongst the Heathens*.

Thus you see they were a proud, rich, high and lascivious people, and yet for all that, *Act. 18. Paul* is commanded in a vision to stay there, *Because God had much people in that place*. And although he was so necessary to all other Churches, yet he spent a year and an half in converting and confirming of people unto God. From whence observe,

*That even amongst the most prophane, and unlikeliest people that are, God may sometimes gather a Church to himself.*

God amongst the most prophane people sometimes gathers a Church to himself.

The Apostle having reckoned up, *1 Cor. 6. 11.* monsters of men, rather than men, whereof some are said to be effeminate, and abusers of themselves with mankind, he addeth *καὶ ταῦτα*, and these things, as if they were peccata, not peccatores, were some of you, but now ye are justified, now ye are washed. God then doth sometimes make Blackmoors to become white; and though man cannot, yet he sometimes doth make figs to grow of thorns, and grapes of thistles.

I have spoken to this truth in *Paul's* case, and therefore shall be brief. Only the reason why God may build his house of such crooked timber, and make his Temple of such rough stones, may be to shew the freeness of his grace, and the efficacy of it. Both which are opposed by *Arminians* and *Papists*, but gladly acknowledged by the godly man, who hath had experience of it. For the freeness of Gods grace, that is seen two wayes, *Absolutely* and *Comparatively*. *Absolutely*; For when God shall call such to himself, who are so utter unworthy, that deserve all the vengeance and wrath God can inflict upon them, this must discover grace to be exceeding free, and gracious. In stead therefore of the curses of the Law, thou meetest with the promises of the Gospel. In stead of hell and damnation, God vouchsafeth Heaven and salvation. What can be freer then Gods love, and his gift herein? Thou art so farre from being in a state of congruity or fitness that thou art in direct opposition and contrariety.

Again, The grace of God is manifested to be free comparatively. For who can give a reason, why God calleth these *Corinthians*, and not *Abinthians*? Were the *Corinthians* the only deserving men in the world? Yea, there were more civil and moral people than they; yet to these, and not to many others is the grace of God communicated. Is not that admirable which our Saviour speaks of *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*, *That if such things had been done in Tyre and Zidon (Mat. 11. 21.) they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes*? You see then that the grace of God is not so much as offered to some, who yet externally at least would have demonstrated more humiliation and reformation, when yet it is plentifully bestowed on those, who are contemners and despisers of it. The freeness then of Gods grace to some, and not to others is admirable, and sheweth that there is no such thing as *Universal Grace*. *Common Grace* is no Grace, as *Austin* said well; neither is God an acceptor of persons in this thing, for that is committed only in things of justice; but in matters of liberality, there the



the free, liberal man may give as he please, to one, and not to another.

In the next place, This discovers the efficacy of Gods grace. For must it not be the great power of God, as shall convert such an obstinate and prophane people to himself? Grace may be much acknowledged, as *Pelagians* did, especially *Papists* and *Arminians*; but it is not *gratia*, except it be *gratuita omni modo*. Therefore except we hold, that grace doth not only reveal the object, or morally perswade the subject, but invincibly and irresistently determine and incline the heart to apply it; so that it cometh not from the good use of our Free-will, but the discriminating power of grace, which giveth both to will and to do, we give not all, no nor the chiefest to grace, but make our will to be the more principal discriminating cause. We are therefore to affirm, That God converts both *per modum sapientia*, and *potentia*; that Gods work upon us is *Ethico-physical* in bringing of us home unto him. It's by way of moral arguments, therefore we are not as stocks and stones; yet by way of power and invincible efficacy; therefore it is not we that make grace efficacious, but grace makes our will: And this truth is not so much proved by books and demonstrations of Authours, as it is from experience. When God taketh sometimes the worst of men, and maketh them the best of Saints: Is here any previous goodness? Is here any *probum ingenium*, or *docilitas animi*, that the *Remonstrants* talk of so much? No, the Scripture speaks of every one in a state of enmity and rebellion against God, when grace comes to convert them.

Therefore let the Use be of *Exhortation* to all such, who have felt this lively power of God raising them out of the grave of sinne, who have been taught of God inwardly, as well as by the outward Ministry, with all joy and thankfulness be astonished at the free and unsearchable riches of Gods grace to thee. How many doth God passe by, of better parts, of greater abilities, of higher conditions in the world, that might have done him more service, and pitch his love upon thee? Oh do thou abhorre all those presumptuous and proud opinions of *Free-will*, and *power to make Gods grace effectual to thee*! Do not bid such as bring such Doctrines, *God Speed*. What doth not thy own experience, doth not the wonderfull power of God upon thee, subduing and overcoming thy heart, when thou wast full of carnal prejudices, and sinfull reasonings abundantly convince thee of this? Let thy own heart, and experience confirm thee more than all their subtil distinctions can unfettle thee.

But I pass from this, and come to a second Observation, which *Calvin* on the place takes notice of. He calls it a *Church* (saith he) though it were so greatly polluted; though both for Doctrine and practice, there were such great disorders, yet for all that he doth not unchurch it, he owneth them still for the people of God, though they were greatly to be reformed, as to the Church administrations; neither are his exhortations to the godly to separate and leave the Church-communions, though thus defiled; he giveth no command to such a thing, but rather exhorts them all in their places to amend and reform, *To purge out the old leaven that was amongst them*. Therefore to forsake polluted Assemblies, and leave them hopeless, seemeth to be a great neglect of our duty; we are rather to stay, that by our abode and presence, we may rectifie things that are crooked. The Doctrine is,

*That a Church may be a true Church of God, although it be defiled with many corruptions several wayes.*

As a godly man may be truly godly, and yet subject to many failings.

Thus

A Church  
may be a true,  
though defiled  
one.



Thus a Church also may be truly Gods Church, the Body of Christ, yet many distempers and sad confusions amongst them. This truth is worthy of all diligent prosecution, because many men, though otherwise good, out of a tenderness and misguided zeal, may separate from our Congregations, deny them to be true Churches, and all because they see many things amongst us that are matter of grief, and a great stumbling block to them. This I confess is, and hath been a sad temptation; but a particular Christian is not to excommunicate and unchurch a Church, till God hath given a Bill of Divorce to it, and hath cast it quite off. An impatience to bear any evil, or disorders in a Church, is not presently to be commended and yielded to, to the utmost. A Christian must have wisdom, and a sound mind, as well as zeal and a tender conscience. Even the Reformed Churches did not wilfully and voluntarily depart from the Church of Rome, but did stay to cure and heal Babylon, untill they drave them away with fire and sword. So that our leaving the Roman Church was not a Schismatical separation, but a forced discession or departure from them. But of this it may be more afterwards.

Let us for the present take notice of what corruptions and disorders were here at Corinth, which yet he calls the Church of God. And

First, Whereas the Apostle comprehends all Religion in these things, *Tit. 2. 12. Righteously, soberly, and godly. Righteously*, in respect of religious duties towards God. We may see how the Corinthians were blame-worthy in all. And

1. For their *sinnes of unrighteousness*; The Apostle sharply reproveth them for their contentions and quarrellings, even so farre, that they went to Law with one another, and that in the *Heathen Judicatories*, which was a great and grievous reproach to the Christian Religion. How would the *Heathens* deride and scoff, to see those that were Christians, and out of appearance from love to heavenly things, forsaking the world and earthly advantages, thus to implead one another about *meum and tuum*, about money matters, or other civil rights, to sue one another before *Heathen Judges*? What could this produce, but to make the *Heathens* say, *They talk of leaving all, and following a crucified Christ, but they will not abate of their earthly rights to one another, not in the least measure?* Which did so grieve the Apostle, that he conjureth them, *What have ye never a wise man, to be an arbitrator amongst you? Why doe ye not rather suffer wrong?* Nay, they were so farre from such meek, self-denying spirits, that they rather did wrong and defraud one another. Now see how zealous the Apostle is in this, *1 Cor. 6. 1, 2, 3.* he saith, *Dare any of you, having a matter against another goe to Law?* Dare any of you, supposing the Gospel, the meekness of Christ, the self-denial and contempt of earthly things, with the scandal redounding to Religion, would sufficiently awe their consciences? Again, *vers. 4.* he tells them, that the things pertaining to this life *βιωτικά*; for about them they quarrelled so much, were so inconsiderable, that they should appoint the least esteemed in the Church for to end such inferiour work. Again, *vers. 5.* *I speak it to your shame:* And *vers. 7.* *There is utterly a fault amongst you.* Thus you see that in matters of Justice between man and man, there were great offences. Only by the way, let none gather from these expressions of *Paul*, that it is unlawfull to go to Law, or appeal to the Civil Magistrate to know his due right, when that is detained from him. For that is many times so farre from being a sinne, that it's a duty; it would be a sinne not to pursue it: as you see *Paul* pleaded his right, and would not go out of prison, when they had done it against Law, till the Magistrates came to intreat him, provided that

What were the corruptions amongst the Corinthians.



How 'tis law-  
full for Chri-  
stians to go to  
Law.

that there be those qualifications, which *Paul* insinuateth.

1. That this impleading be *not before Heathens and Pagans*, who hate the Christian Religion.

2. That we have such *Meeknesse of Spirit as willingly to suffer wrong, did not the Gospel of Christ, or the Law of the Land, or the good of others require it of us.* And

Lastly, *That we be willing to referre all our controversies to any just and wise arbitratours.* If these things be premised, and yet unreasonable and absurd men will make a spoil, and a scoff of men, then both Religion, and Justice calls them to defend themselves, and it would be a sin to neglect it.

In the second place, for *Sobriety*, which is the expression of such graces as belong to our selves, *viz. Temperance and Chastity.* How grossly did the *Corinthians* offend here? There were some that had repented of their fornication and uncleanness; and for drunkenness, some did presume to come to the Lords Table, not freed from it. Thus you see many of them were rather beasts than a Church.

Lastly, For *Godliness* or *Religion*, there were also sad disorders about that. There were some that *denied the Resurrection*, that said, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die*; these were Atheists. And certainly had this been the Assertion of the whole Church, and not some few only amongst them, if it had been their Catholick and Universal Doctrine, maintained by all, they had ceased to be a Church, they had degenerated into meer Atheism; but it was some only that were thus infected. Again, Another offence in Religion was, their great Church-divisions, some exalting *Paul*, some *Apollo*; insomuch that in stead of edifying and building up one another; they were divided into as many Sects almost, as they had Teachers. And then lastly, There was horrible confusion and ungodliness in respect of Church-order. All godly Discipline was laid aside, the administration of the Sacraments was promiscuous, come who would come, though in their unworthiness, they might receive it. And although Gods judgment was upon them, either the Plague, or some general disease, and that because no better order was about the Sacrament, yet for all that they did not judge or condemn themselves. Thus this Church was like a very Chaos, and yet a Church still.





## SERM. XVII.

*A further Discovery of the truth of this Assertion, that a Church may be a true Church, though much defiled both in Doctrine and Manners.*

2 COR. I. 1.

*To the Church of God, which is at Corinth, &c.*

**T**His Church of Corinth is dignified (as you heard) with this glorious Title of the *Church of God*, notwithstanding those manifest and notorious depravations that were amongst them, and that of all sorts.

This truth we entred upon, and before we give you some demonstrations to evidence it, it is good to take notice of some observable particulars, which tend to the clearing of it. Only this must be premised, that whereas a Church may be denied to be so, either from its constitution, or from its conversation. We are speaking of the later way, and so consider,

First, *That the soundness and purity of Churches doth admit of degrees*: That as one Starre doth excell another in glory, yet both Starres: So one Church may greatly transcend another in orthodoxy and purity, and yet both be Churches. In those seven Churches of *Asia*, there were some reprov'd more than others. We cannot expect that all Churches should be of the same measure in knowledge and grace, no more than particular Christians: and therefore we are not to conclude such a Church is no Church, because not so pure as another Church, no more than such a man is not a godly man, because he hath not such a measure of Illumination and Sanctification, as another. And to say in the general, That it is a Christians duty to find out the purest Church in the world, and there to associate himself with it, must needs fill a Christian with infinite perplexities of conscience; as also to expose him to insupportable outward inconveniences. Let us not therefore do with a Church, as a godly tender heart is apt to do with himself, because he finds many failings and great imperfections, therefore he is ready to judge that he hath no grace at all. Thus because there are several disorders and distempers in such a Church, which are deservedly daily matter of groan, and sorrow to thee, therefore thou beginnest to sentence such a Church; as no longer *Gods Church*. Again, seeing that there are gradual differences of soundness and purity in Churches, this should also make every Church take heed of appropriating the glorious name of a Church, or Saints, or Christians to themselves only, as if none were Saints or Christians, but what are members of their Society. This is and hath been a most uncharitable proud disposition of some Churches. The Popish Church saith, There is no sanctity or holiness, but with them. *Inter Catholicos*

Some observations clearing the truth, that a Church, though defiled may be the Church of God.



(saith Bellarmine) *multi quidem sunt mali, sed inter hereticos ne unus quidem est bonus*. What a censorious condemnation is this? Not one good Protestant (whom they call Hereticks) not in all our Churches. Thus they only appropriate the name of Church and sanctity to themselves. So the *Donatists* did of old, they inclosed the Church only amongst themselves; they called none Christians but themselves: To become a *Donatist* was to become a *Christian* with them. So that we see, it's very hard for Churches not to admire their own wayes and constitutions, thinking that none are Churches but themselves; there may be *pharisaical* Churches, that may condemn other Churches as *Publicans*, as well as it is so in persons; whereas it is good to observe, that the Scripture doth describe Christians by such names as do not at all relate, or distinguish by any Government, or external constitution, to be a believer, to be a Saint, to be a Christian. These titles denote either some inward qualification or external profession, but do not at all insinuate, what kinds of order or way they are in; yet this is not so to be understood, as if Christs order and way, his Government and Discipline were an indifferent or arbitrary thing; only it is to shew, that we are not to monopolize godliness amongst our selves, meerly because of a Church-constitution, although we are not to receive any form or spiritual order in our Churches, but of Christs appointment. There is a great difference and latitude in the soundness and purity of Churches.

Secondly, When we speak of a Church being Gods true Church, though greatly corrupted, we must take heed of two extreams, the first of those, who therefore would have no Reformation, though there be never so many disorders, but say, It's wisdom and prudence to let all things be, as they have been, for it may be Gods Church, though there be divers abuses. Take heed of such carnal indulgence as this, because it's the Church of God, therefore make no more stirre, let errors and prophaneness alone, let disorders continue; and this many times is palliated with fair specious pretences, that such indeavours to reform, will breed great discontents and divisions; in stead of having a pure Church, it may be made no Church at all, especially this is the more difficulty obtained, if it be a Reformation in worship and manners; for we are more willing to sit down under an *Orthodox Church*, then a *pure Church*. We can more easily endure to have sound Doctrine established, then pure and holy Order, because this doth so directly contradict our lusts, and pleasures. Hence *Malachy* prophesieth of Christs repurgation of his Church, as a very dreadfull time, even like the day of judgement, *Mal. 3. 2, 4.* Christ is there said to sit as a refiner, and as a purger to take away dross, but who shall abide the day of his coming? Christs coming being thus like the Refiners fire, and the Fullers sope, was as terrible as the day of judgment to them, Who may abide it (saith he?) You see then orthodoxy is sooner received than godly and holy order; but we are to know, that though we have many things to glory in, that we are a true Church, that we have excellent preaching, and many learned Officers in it, yet if there be not an endeavour to take away all offences and scandals, there is great matter of humiliation. The Apostle speaketh notably in this matter to the *Corinthians*, *1 Cor. 5. 6.* Your glorying is not good, &c. The *Corinthians* they gloried and boasted in many things, but as long as they did not cast out the old leaven, or the wicked man, but this leaven was in danger to leaven the whole lump, therefore he telleth them, *Their glorying was not good*, there was greater cause to be deeply humbled, because of such disorders amongst them. Let us not then, though we can and may prove our Church to be the Church of God, therefore sit down and take our rest, as if therefore reformation of corruptions were needless: No the Apostle doth farre otherwise to this Church of *Corinth*, though he call it the Church of God, yet his Epistle is full of sharp reproof to them; he is very zealous and lively in putting of them upon this, that they become a new lump,



*lump*, that they be made as it were a new Church, and a new Congregation. Farre be it therefore from us to excuse or connive at our publick impieties, because *Corinth*, though so polluted is a Church: No, we are to tremble and humble our selves under such disorders, they are great provocations of Gods anger. You see God did begin to judge and chasten this Church of *Corinth*; God takes notice, and is very angry with all these disorders, and great neglect. Therefore if you observe those Epistles of Christ from Heaven, to the *seven Churches of Asia*, where their works were not perfect, where there were any decayes; yea, if Christ had any thing against them, though there were other things commendable, yet he will take notice and rebuke them therein; yea, to some he threatens to *take away their Candlesticks*, that is, their Ordinances, and to unchurch them. Oh then, let us humble our selves under Gods hand for all our Church-sins, all our Assembly-iniquities, lest the wrath of God break out upon us!

The second extream we are to take heed of, is, That *because of the corruptions that are in a Church, we are not so farre transported with misguided zeal, as to take no notice of the truth of a Church*. Some are apt so to attend to a *true Church*, that they never matter the *corruptions of it*. Others again, they do so eye the *corruptions*, that they never regard the *truth of it*: but it is good to avoid both these extreams; Whence cometh that impatiency in us to bear any evil in a Church? Whence is it that we uncharitably rend from it? Is it not because we do not consider it may be a true Church, and salvation is there to be had, yea conversion and regeneration, though there be many things to be reformed? There is no Church so pure, but that there are some imperfections in it; no Church so reformed, but in some things it needeth a reformation. Thou mayest go from Church to Church, and be like *Noah's Dove*, not know where to set thy feet: if thou look for absolute perfection in any Church whether thou goest. As there is no constitution of the body, which hath an exact temperament *ad pondus*, but some humour or other doth predominate; so there is no Church that is of such a perfect frame, but it hath its several grievances, and though it may be freed from those evils they separated from, yet they may be assaulted with others that are as destructive of a Church in a contrary way, though freed from tyranny, yet not from divisions, and daily subdivisions amongst themselves. So that in these things we are diligently to make the Scripture our Rule.

Thirdly, Though that Church be a true Church where we live, yet if many corruptions do abound therein, we must take heed, *That we do not pollute our selves thereby, or become partakers of any sinne indulged amongst them*. As we may not sinfully separate upon this ground, because they are no Church, so neither may we continue so, as to pollute and defile our selves with any known sin. The Apostles exhortation to the *Corinthians* under these manifold pollutions, is, that every one in their proper place, should endeavour their new moulding. So that under Church-pollutions, thou art to consider, what God calls thee to do, to rebuke, exhort, admonish; and if this will not do, to complain to Church-Officers, who are to guide and watch over the flock; and if yet this will not do, then to be the more earnest with God in prayer, to bring about Reformation notwithstanding all the gainsayings of wicked men: To mourn and sigh unto God, as a *Lot in Sodom*, *vexing thy righteous soul continually*; as a *lamenting Jeremiah* among the *apostatizing Israelites*. And certainly God doth in a special manner take notice of such, who do mourn for those abominations, that they cannot remove or take away, *Ezek. 9.4.* when thou canst appeal to God, saying, O Lord, these corruptions, these disorders, they grieve me to the very heart! I cry out daily, *Wo be unto me, because I dwell with men of polluted lips*. This will much ingage God to thee. Likewise we read, *Revel. 3.4.* in what a special



Reasons shewing the truth of it.

cial manner God takes notice of a few names in Sardis, which had not defiled their garments. To be therefore in the midst of a defiled Church, and yet to keep thy self unspotted, this is admirable; as they record of the river *Alphens*, which though it runne into the Sea, yet it keeps its own natural sweetness; though we have communion with the Church in those things, that are commanded by God, yet we are not to partake with them in any evil way: as those seven thousand in *Elijah's* time, though they did not depart from the Church of *Israel*, yet they would not bow their knee to *Baal*.

In the next place, Let us demonstrate this, that a Church may be Gods Church, though it be greatly corrupted. And

First, It may be seen from the induction of several Churches; as for example, the Church of the Jews, they were Gods people, and God did own them as his; yet, as appeareth by the Prophets complaints and daily reproofs, they were full of *Idolatries* and all moral impieties; and for all this, there were many repentings and turnings in Gods bowels, to speak after the manner of men, before he would call them *Lo-ammi*, a people no more to him. But you may say, That was in the Old Testament, when the Spirit of God was not poured out so effectually. Consider then besides, this Church of *Corinth*, the Churches of *Galatia*; were not they farre infected with doctrinal pollutions and vicious lusts of the flesh? That the Apostle mentioneth not any where, such zeal and sharpness as he doth to them, threatening them with *Apostasie from Christ*, and that having begun in the Spirit, they would end in the flesh. We might instance also in several other Churches: But as the Father said elegantly, *We need not drink up the whole Sea, to know whether the water be saltish; a drop or two will suffice.*

Secondly, This may be demonstrated from the relation and comparison, the Church is adorned with, in reference to Christ. It's often compared to *Christs wife*; now the wife continueth a true wife, and is not to be deserted, unless for *Adultery*, which breaketh the conjugal knot; otherwise though she have many sad infirmities, which may make the relation bitter and uncomfortable, yet it doth not unwise her. The Church is also *Christs body*; now a body is not forsaken by the soul, though it be a sore body, a leprous body; a leper is a man, though a leper: It's *Christs garden*; now this may have many weeds in it, and many things defile it, yet it is not presently made a waste wilderness. Thus it is with the Church of God, she may have many failings in Doctrine and manners, yet not be quite unchurched.

Thirdly, *From a godly man*. A true child of God may have sad falls, as we see in *Peter* and *David*, yet for all this not be quite excluded out of the Covenant of grace; they did not lose their sonship, even in those sad transgressions, and will God be more severe to a whole Church than to one person?

*Use of Instruction*, what a deal of prudence and wisdom is required in every godly man under Church-pollutions? To know what to do, to understand how to deport himself, for this he must be guided by the Word, and the advise of those that are faithfull, on the one hand, not to be stupid or careless, much less complying and communicating with the Church defilements; and on the other side, not to be so transported with misguided zeal and impatience against evil, as thereby to rend the Church causlessly, and to sin our selves, because others sin.

SERM.





## SERM. XVIII.

*The Preheminence of the Church of God above all Civil Societies. As likewise concerning Paul's writing this second Epistle to the Corinthians; how hard a thing it is for Churches to keep within their proper bounds; and what great care Ministers ought to have, to use all means lawfull to promote the Churches, which they have relation to.*

2 COR. I. I.

*To the Church of God, which is at Corinth.*

**T**His clause hath been fruitful for much spiritual and edifying matter, I shall conclude it at this time. There are three things more, which are to be deduced from this subject. And

First, Whereas you see, that the Epistle is not directed to the *Magistracy* or *Civil Governours of the City*; neither is the least notice taken of their wealth or external pomp. We may observe,

*That the Church of God, as it is a Church, doth farre surpass all Civil Societies, and temporal Dignities.*

The Apostle owneth nothing in this famous City, but their faith, their profession of Christ, and subjection to him. A Church is a supernatural Society, for supernatural and spiritual ends, where God is in a more special manner present; and therefore though the civil Magistrate be also of God, and civil Societies they are of him; yet not in that peculiar relation as a Church is. Thus the Psalmist saith, *Psal. 87. 2. The Lord loveth the gates of Sion, more than all the dwellings of Jerusalem*, that is, the Assemblies of his people met together in holy Ordinances, above all other their civil meetings, though never so pompous and magnificent. Therefore it's good to consider, that in all the inscriptions which the Apostle makes to any Churches, he doth not at all speak of any civil or temporal Dignities, that the places where the Churches were, had but only mention of their spiritual titles, as a *Church*, *Saints*, *Believers*, *Beloved of God*. And certainly, if we do truly consider things, these Titles do as farre transcend all civil glory, as the Heavens do the Earth. The Apostle writing to the *Romans*

The Church of God as a Church doth far surpass all civil Societies, and temporal dignities.



in all that Epistle takes no notice of the glory of that City, which was the *Orbis Domina*, and which they usually called *eterna Urbs*; he mentioneth their faith, *which was known to the whole world*, Rom. 1. 8. not the Roman and warlike power whereby they were so terrible to all Nations. It is good to consider this; for how few Churches do esteem of, or judge themselves by their Church consideration, but by their civil respects? As they are such a City, such a Corporation, glorying in their Liberties and Charters; whereas the consideration of themselves as a Church, should far more possess their hearts.

Briefly to understand this, consider

First, *That the Church and Commonwealth, or any civil Society, are two distinct things; the Church is one thing, and the State another thing.* In the times of *Heathen Magistrates*, and while there was outward persecution, by the civil Powers which then ruled, it's plain; for the City of Rome, and the Church of Rome in Paul's time were wholly different. So at Corinth, the civil Magistracy of the Town did not seem to be Christians, the Corporation of the Town was not (as I may say) made a Church. The Christian Religion was not at this time established in Corinth by the City-Laws and Government; only many in Corinth were become believers. So that it's plain, The same *Corinthians*, as they were a Church, lived by other Laws, and by different principles, then as members of the City of Corinth. As he was a Citizen, so he met in their civil Judicatories, so he acted according to the Laws of the City (provided nothing was against Gods command) but as a member of the Church there, so they meet with others in spiritual communion, for holy and spiritual ends. Thus it is in a State, while they are generally *Heathenish*. But some have doubted, *Whether if a Commonwealth become Christian, then there is any difference there between the Church and such a Christian State? Whether then they are not all one?* But certainly by the first Institution, and plantation of Churches, by Christ and the Apostles, Churches were founded and imbodyed; their Officers, imploiment, and the end of their Society appointed, without any relation to the civil State and Government where they lived. And therefore a Christian State, doth not civilly govern, nor bear the Sword, punishing with death; neither are there supream Governours, Lords or Noblemen in it, as a Church; for then these should be Church-officers, and instituted by Christ; a *Justice of Peace* is not of Christ, as a *Pastor in the Church*. Neither on the other side are the preaching of the Word, the administration of Sacraments, the exercising of Church-censures, the effects of a Christian State, but as a Church. So that it's necessary by Scripture to acknowledge these two, a Church, and the State; as two distinct Societies, though the same men may be members of the same.

Secondly, *It's a most blessed thing, when the civil State and Church are happily united together. so that both in their several stations do promote the Kingdom of Christ.* There are extremities on both sides, some exclude all civil Government from the matters of the Church or Religion; as if the Magistrate, and the civil power had nothing to do to appoint any thing in reference to these spiritual matters, which if so, then Kings and Queens could not be *nursing Fathers and Mothers in the Church*; Then the Magistrate should not be the *Custos utriusque tabula*; then holy Magistrates should sinne in reforming abuses and corruptions which are crept into the Church of God, which yet *Hezekiah* and *Josiah* did; and so likewise *Constantine* did, to his great praise, saying to the Officers of the Church, he was *ἐκκλησιαστικὸς ὁ βασιλεὺς*, He had an external *Episcopacie* and *Superintendency*.

Then



Then in the ſecond place, there is another extream error, which is to confound the State and the Church, as if Chriſt had appointed no diſtinct Officers or work, but that any man authorized by a commiſſion from the civil power, was hereby enabled to do any Office in the Church, and that Chriſt had not ſet *Paſtors* or *Teachers* in his Church, but civil Governours. Now how bleſſed and happy hath it been, when theſe Societies have been friendly complying, and furthering one another. The Commonwealth helping and furthering, defending and protecting the Church: The Church alſo performing all Church-Ordinances, in ſuch a manner, that God may bleſs that ſtate, and make it to be as *Obed-Edoms* houſe, while he entertained the Ark, *Quamdiu respublica manent hoſpitia Eccleſia tamdiu ſunt duratura.*

Hence in the third place, *The Devil and his instruments have alwayes laboured the ruine of godlineſſ, by making diviſions, and uſing ſeveral ſtratagems to overthrow the harmonious Unity that ought to be in the Church of God, and civil State.* In Popery, we ſee abominable miſchief came to Religion by the uſurping of the name of the Church; for they excluded the Magiſtrates and ſupream Governours, from any Government therein, and at laſt pleading exemption from all Obedience and Subjection to the chief powers, though ſo expreſſly contrary to *Paul*, Rom. 13. Thus they make a few only, yea but one, the *Pope* at laſt, to be the Church, and then attribute to him a power to diſpoſe of Kingdoms and States, where and to whom he pleaſeth, *directly and immediately*, ſay ſome; and thoſe who do moſt mince it ſay, *indirecte, and in ordine ad ſpiritualia.* On the other ſide, ſometimes the civil State hath been jealous, yea and violently perſecuting the Church of God, as if that of *Julian* were true, *A Church and a civil Society could not ſtand together;* as if Chriſt had commanded ſuch things of his Church, that were inconfiſtent with, and would utterly overthrow all civil Government. Thus *Pilate*, he was jealous, becauſe he heard of *Chriſts Kingdom*; and although it be known that his Kingdom is not of this world, that Church power is wholly ſpiritual in order to mens ſouls, yet how often are the Governours ſuſpicious about it? But theſe particulars are of large conſideration, and handled by learned Authours. I come therefore to ſhew, That a peoples conſideration of themſelves as a Church, ſhould be preferred above all their civil Glory and Dignity. It ought to be more (as one Emperour ſaid) to be a Member of the Church, then an Emperour of the whole world. The Church of Rome in *Pauls* time, while pure in the faith, was more admirable, then the City of Rome, which was Queen over the whole world.

The Grounds why we are to give this preheminance to a Church-conſideration, are

Reasons ſhewing the truth of it.

First, *Becauſe a Church-constitution is ſupernatural, all is of God in a more ſpecial manner, then in civil Societies.* For although all civil Powers be of God, and the making of civil Societies, of making Nations and Kingdoms be in an extraordinary manner attributed to him in the Scripture, yet ſtill this is in the courſe of Nature, but a Church is planted by the grace of God, and it's above the work of Nature, either ordinary or extraordinary, to be made ſuch a Society.

Secondly, *As we are a Church, we have the neareſt relation and reference to God;* not as a City, or a Corporation are, but as a Church are we his Houſe, his Body, his Vinyard. Neither can we expect ſuch preſence of God in our civil Aſſemblies and Judicatories, as in Church-meetings. The power and grace of God is in a more powerfull and ſpecial manner diſcovering it ſelf there.

Thirdly,



Thirdly, *Hereby we have greater Titles, and more noble Dignity*; Although it's true in the account of the world, nothing is more contemptible. The Church is called the *Kingdom of God*; we are hereby the *children of God*; the *Covenant of Grace is made with us*. So that all who are not of the Church, be they never such glorious, victorious, and wise Nations, yet they are *without God*, and they are *under the Kingdom of Satan*, whereas *Gods Church is the Object of his love*, there he is said to *delight to dwell*.

Use 1.

*Use of Instruction to Believers, who are the Church of God, to consider that title and relation they are in as such.* Though great, though rich, though honourable, yet let it not be accounted equal to the being one of *Gods Church*. If the Devil should shew thee the glory of all the world, promising to bestow it on thee, upon condition thou renouncest thy Church interest, and Church membership, with great indignation refuse it. What high esteem was put upon the being a *Roman Citizen*? Paul stood upon his *Roman freedom* in a particular case; but this is nothing to be of that free City, which is *Jerusalem from above*, even in this Earth. By meditating on this, thou wilt be more thankfull to God, that he hath made thee one of his Church, than if he had given all the *Turkish Empire* to thee, for that is but as *Luther* said, *Mica cani*, a crum to the dog, in respect of the childrens bread.

Use 2.

Again, *The consideration of a Church-privilege and interest, will make thee most to attend to that, in disposing and selling thy self, when at liberty.* Most people look to live, where the best trading is, the greatest privileges, or best earthly accommodation. But if thou art one free to settle thy self where thou mayest; thou that fearest God will look upon Church advantages as the greatest glory and profit of all.

Use 3.

Lastly, *This will take off all those general thoughts, which do almost reign every where, to consider of men by their Cities and Townes, not by their Churches*; It's the Town at such a place, the Corporation at such a place, but no attending to that place, as it is a *Church of God*. Hence it is that we are wholly drowned in the thoughts of our selves, as a Town, as a Parish in civil respects, but never considering the relation of a Church, and what duties we are obliged unto thereby.

Why Paul writeth this second Epistle to the Corinthians.

The two other Observations are to be dispatched in a little room, as from the Apostles writing a second time to the Church of *Corinth*, which he seldom did to any Church, but to that of the *Thessalonians*, and to *Timothy* a single person. One reason whereof amongst others, was, because that his former Epistle had taken some good effect; and whereas they had been too remiss before about their indulgence to that incestuous person, it seemeth this Epistle had now so awakened them, that they began to be too severe to him, though repenting and humbling himself, as appeareth, Chap. 2. 6, 7. whereupon he exhorteth them, *To comfort him, lest he be swallowed up with too much sorrow*. It's true, there were other reasons, why he wrote this second Epistle, but this is one amongst the rest. From whence we might observe,

It is very hard for the Church of God to keep within their proper bounds in Church-administrations.

*That it's very hard for the Churches of God to keep within their proper bounds about Church-administrations.*

Nothing is more ordinary, than to fall from one extream to another. These *Corinthians* that were so negligent in good order, that many pollutions were suffered amongst them; insomuch that Gods judgements had surprized them for their default herein. Now when awakened to do their duty,



duty, they are ready to overdo, and from too much remifness, to fall in-  
to too much severity. Thus in many other things we might instance, how  
the Churches of God have fallen from one extremity to another; but this  
subject, especially as it relateth to Church-Discipline will be more sutablely treat-  
ed of in Chap. 2.

I therefore briefly raise a third Observation, and that is from the Apo-  
stles care, and zeal to build up the Church of God. For whereas he could  
not come to the Corinthians as yet, lest any Church-corruption or dis-  
orders should arise thereby, he endeavours by writing to do that in  
his absence, which he would not do by his presence. From whence we  
may gather,

*That it's the Ministers duty, not only by personal preaching, but by all other  
lawfull wayes to promote that Church, he hath any relation unto.*

It is a Ministers  
duty to use all  
lawfull means  
to promote  
the Church he  
hath relation  
to.

When Paul cannot preach, he will write. This zeal in Paul drew out  
those many Epistles, that now we have recorded in Scripture. Our Apo-  
stle speaketh notably to this, 1 Thess. 2. 17, 18. and Chap. 3. 1. where he  
sheweth his cordial affections towards that people, with what violence he  
was kept from them; and because Satan hindered him, he saith, *He could  
no longer forbear, but would be left at Athens alone*, without any comfort  
or solace, rather than not to send to them, that so they might not be mo-  
ved from the Gospel. Thus at other times we see this glorious Apostle, when  
present, yet not contented with his publick preaching, did from house to  
house, as occasion served with tears, beseech and testifie every one to cleave  
unto the Lord.

From this example of Paul, who though an Apostle, and so not bound  
to attend on particular Churches, yet did by letters confirm and quicken  
those Churches he had planted. We see how great and grievous a sinne a  
*voluntary and unnecessary non-residence* is, in those Pastours, who by their  
Office are bound to a particular Flock, and to watch over them. For  
though in some weighty cases for the good of the whole Church they may  
be detained from their Flock, yet voluntarily and slothfully to do this, will at  
last be found a grievous soul-murdering sin.

Use 2. To reprove that people, who complain of too much preaching, and  
too much ministerial imploiment, thinking it needless.





## SERM. XIX.

## Of the Name and Nature of a Church-Saint.

2 COR. I. 1.

*With all the Saints which are in all Achaia.*

**W**E are now arrived at the last clause in this verse, which containeth a more general Description of those to whom he directs this Epistle. Some Epistles are called *Catholick*, because not inscribed to any particular Churches or persons, but to the whole Church of God. Others are more *particular* and *local*, as this to the *Corinthians*, yet we see it's not so inscribed to them; but that also, all the adjacent Saints are comprehended in it. Yea, though *Paul* and others wrote their Epistles to certain Churches and persons, yet they are in some sense *Catholick*; for they all were written as a perpetual Rule to the whole Church of God, in all ages. So that this Epistle doth concern even the Churches of God in other Nations, as well as that of *Corinth*, when guilty of such disorder.

So that in the Inscription, which is more general than the former clause, we may take notice;

1. Of the Persons to whom *Paul* writeth, and they are described by their qualifications, *Saints*.

2. By a Note of Universality, *All the Saints*. There is none so mean or inconsiderable, but the Apostle writeth as well to such a poor contemptible Saint, as well as to the greatest and most eminent.

3. There is the place where, *Which are in all Achaia*.

How the Apostle could call the *Corinthians* Saints, when many of them were so foully polluted.

I shall first consider the Qualification, *Saints*. He giveth this title to all that were of this Church; even as in the former Epistle, he saith, *They were sanctified in Jesus Christ*. Now the Question is, *How the Apostle could give the title of Saints to to all the Corinthians, with those in Achaia; for they both seem guilty of the same sins; and therefore from this Epistle directed to them, when yet they were so foully polluted. Was the incestuous person, before he repented? Were those unclean persons, that had not humbled themselves for their sins, and Paul was afraid he should find them such when he came? Were those Saints? Were such, who denied the Resurrection, yea that had no knowledge of God, as Paul said of some, to whose shame he spake it, were these Saints?*

To this *Austin* of old answered, and so some of late, *That the Apostle speaks this generally of the whole body, because some amongst them were Saints. The denomination being from the most worthy part. So that they conclude of this as a Rule to interpret Scripture by, To understand that of some parts, which yet is attributed to to the whole. And for this reason (they say) it is, That the Apostle writing to some Churches, as to this of Corinth, doth sometimes speak of them, as if they were all godly; and at another time, he reproveth them so, as if they were all blame-worthy. Thus because some were Saints indeed, therefore*



fore he writeth to the whole Church, as if Saints; as we call a field of corn by that name, though there may be many weeds and bryars amongst it. This hath some truth, but yet this is not all.

Secondly, It may be thought that the Apostle calls them Saints, *in the judgment of charity*, because they did outwardly profess their faith and obedience in Christ, even as Paul saith of *Sylvanus*, 1 Pet. 5. 12. *A faithfull brother, as I suppose*; but a judgement of charity must be according to truth, and he knew that all in *Corinth* were not truly Saints. And as for that expression of *Pauls* concerning *Sylvanus*; *Calvin*, *Estius* and others, do not relate the phrase (*ὡς λογίζομαι*) to a faithfull brother, but to the *σικελιον*, the few things, or briefly, as added for *Modesty sake*; and indeed if it were related to *Sylvanus*, it would not commend his fidelity, but rather give occasion to doubt of it. But if we attribute it to *Sylvanus*, the word *λογίζομαι* is not *ισχυει*, or *ιγδυμαι*, it signifieth a firm and undoubted judgement upon good consideration, therefore our *English* word (*suppose*) doth not so well answer it.

Therefore in the third place, That distinction of a *Saint* by *external profession* or *dedication to God* thereby, and by *internal and spiritual renovation* is the most genuine to answer this doubt. Some were Saints by *inward regeneration*; Others were Saints by *external profession* and *outward submission*; so that they had not as yet renounced their Christianity; and this sense the Apostle plainly makes, when he gives that opposition between *Heathens* and *Saints*, as 1 Cor. 6. 1. *Dare any of you go to law before the unjust, that is, the Heathens, and not before Saints?* where *Saint* is opposed to an *Heathen*. So *vers. 6.* a *brother*, which is all one with a *Saint*, is opposed to an *unbeliever*. All that came out of the world to profess Christ, are called *Saints and believers*, though even amongst them all were not godly. Now you must know, that there are degrees of godliness,

1. There is that which is *supream and infinite*, and thus God is *holy, holy, holy*.

2. There is *created holiness*, and that either *perfect*, such as the humane Nature of Christ, the Angels and glorified Saints in Heaven have, or else *imperfect*, subject to many imperfections and weaknesses. Hence saith *Salmeron*, *We dare not call any man a Saint, while he liveth on this earth, till he be consummated*; but that is absurd; for to be a *Saint* is no more than to be *holy*; so that if we may call any *holy*, we may also call them *Saints*, as our Translators do for the most part render the word. The Papists indeed they call only those that are canonized *Saints*, who are already in Heaven; therefore those that lived in the Old Testament, because of their opinion of their being in *Limbo Patrum*, they are never in the *Roman Church* called *Saints*, they never say *Saint David*, or *Saint Isaiah*. *Salmeron* also observeth from this title of *Saints* given to all believers, That in the *Infancy* of the Church (saith he) all were called *Saints*, in the *Adolescentia*, only the Bishops, and Officers in the Church, but in *Senectute*, only those that are translated into Heaven. But we must conform to Scripture, not humane speculations. The Greek word *αγιος*, answering the Hebrew *Kodesh*; for the Septuagint seldom translate it by *καθαρος*, or *δοτος*; but generally by *αγιος*, is by some said to be as much as *sine terra*, without earth, or any worldly pollution. But the best Grammarians derive it from *αζουμι*, to reverence and respect, as *ισχυς* from *ισχυω*, to desire; because all holy things are with much reverence to be regarded. Whereas then to be *holy*, hath a two-fold principal signification:

1. To be dedicate and set apart to God.
2. To be inherently sanctified; and both these applicable in the Text. We may observe,

¶ That all those who are of Gods Church are Saints by profession and dedication, and ought to be Saints by their lives and conversations.

All that are of the Church are Saints by profession, and ought to be so in their conversation.



What is comprehended under Church-Sainthood.

Hence *Rom. 1. 7.* we have that expression, called *Saints*, that is, either called to be *Saints*, holiness being the term to which of their vocation; or *Saints* by calling, as *Paul* was by his calling an *Apostle*. Both these tend to the same thing, and all oblige to holiness.

First, Let us consider, how much this *Church-Sainthood* doth comprehend, what degrees and steps it hath. And

1. It doth imply, *Their being under the external dispensation of Gods Covenant of Grace.* All that are under the Covenant administration, are thereby *Saints*, and *holy*, though all are not regenerated. Upon this account it is, that the children of one, or more believing Parents are called *holy*, *1 Cor. 7. 14.* where to be under the Covenant is enough to give this denomination of *holy*. And hence it is, that all the people of the *Jews* among whom there were many prophane and unholy persons, in respect of inward Sanctity, are yet called all of them *Saints*, because the Covenant-dispensation was towards them. *Psal. 77. 2.* The *Psalmist* complaineth, *That the enemies had given the flesh of his Saints to the beasts of the earth*, where the Nation of the *Jews*, destroyed by their enemies, are all called *Saints*. So *Psal. 89. 5, 7.* the assembly of the *Israelites*, wherein also *David* did meet to praise God, is called, the *Assembly of the Saints*. Now we cannot think, that every *Israelite* who came to sacrifice and serve God was truly *holy*. Yea *Psal. 50.* God complaineth of such, *Who came and took his name into their mouth, and yet hated to be reformed.* Therefore they are called *Saints*, because they are all under the Covenant of Grace.

2. *Church-Sainthood* consists in a dedication, and consecrating our selves unto God. For our Baptism is the initial Sacrament, and by it we are externally sanctified and set apart to God from the Devil, sinne and the world. For as in the Old Testament, there were by certain ceremonial Rites, dedicating of persons and things to God, which thereby had a relative holiness, and so were called *holy*, because dedicated; Thus though with some dissimilitude, by the Sacrament of Baptism, we are baptized into the Name of the Father, the Sonne, and the holy Ghost; which amongst other things, signifieth this also, that we are given up to God from the world and the Devil, to be no more theirs, not to live according to their course and way. And for this reason it is that those who are not of the Church, are said to be *without*, *1 Cor. 5.* and the world is distinct to the Church, when therefore of the Church, we are not of the world; we are not without under the kingdom of Satan, but we are of the body of Christ, of his house; and our Baptism doth sacramentally denote our communion with Christ. Now although all that are baptized do not in deed and in truth put on Jesus Christ, yet as long as they do not renounce their Baptism, so long by that there is an outward dedication of them to God. And thus that *Apostate* spoken of, *Heb. 10. 29.* who never had true grace, yet is said to be *sanctified by the blood of the Covenant*, whereof the Sacraments are seals. So that our sacramental relation doth give an outward denomination of a Saint, or an holy person, though if there be no inward holiness, the condemnation of such will be farre more dreadfull and intollerable, than of the vilest and worst of Heathens.

3. This *Church-Sainthood* goeth a further step, and that is, *An external profession of our faith in Christ, and submission unto his will.* For a Church being a visible Society, there must be some external and visible sign, whereby we may demonstrate our selves to be of the Church. Hence *Rom. 10.* it's said, *That with the mouth confession is made to salvation.* There may be many secret and hidden *Atheists* in the Church of God, yet because they do externally profess the Christian Religion, therefore it is that they are of the Church, in respect of the external and visible state of it. Thus *Simon Magnus*, and others, while they did profess their faith in Christ, they were under the name of a Church, and believers, and so of *Saints*.

4. There



4. There is yet a further degree in this Church-Saintship, and that is, *When besides this sacramental and external holiness, there are some workings of Gods Spirit upon their souls.* So that the Christian Religion hath some kind of influence upon them. They are not only titular Saints, but they have some kind of inchoate and imperfect workings of Gods Spirit upon their souls, which have a tendency to godliness, or at least a resemblance and shew of it. So that in the opinion of others, and many times in their own persuasions likewise, they are true Saints. Now these may well enough be stiled Saints, because the Scripture attributes to them such acts as have the name of holiness. So Mat. 13. the temporary believer likened to the thorny ground, is said to have faith, and to receive the Word with joy. Some are said in 2 Pet. 2. To escape the pollutions of the world. Yea Heb. 6. some are said to be enlightened, to have tasted the good Word of God, to partake of the holy Ghost, &c. and yet for all that, such were never true Saints. For such that are so, can no more finally apostatize than true starres can fall from the Heavens. Comets and blazing Stars may have a great lustre for a while, but being composed of terrestrial exhalations, at last they fall into the womb of that Earth from whence they sprang. Thus those, who have only some imperfect, common works of Gods Spirit, abounding in gifts, and many admirable abilities, these may seem in Saintship to exceed many that are truly so; but because there was never true and deep rooting, when the storms and tempests shall arise, this glorious building will not have so much as a stone left upon a stone. Those uncomfortable Teachers, injurious to the grace of God, that do so peremptorily dogmatize the Apostasie of the Saints, do yet never bring such Texts of Scripture or instances, that do necessarily prove those to be true Saints that are spoken of. Saul was never a true Saint, Judas was never a true Saint, and so no wonder of hopefull beginnings, degenerated into such tragical and horrid beginnings. Now whereas the former mentioned, viz. those that are only baptized, that give an external submission to Christs Laws especially, if (as too many do) wallowing in all the wayes of the flesh, and carnal excess, if these (I say) may by all be proclaimed to be no real, but nominal Saints, all the world seeth they are Christians in name, but beasts and devils in respect of real Saintship. Yet the great difficulty, and the constant wisdom of a Christian is exercised about the discerning this later holiness from that which is true. To know, when I am gone further, than any hypocrite or reprobate can attain unto. This as we are greatly to study and examine our selves in; so we are to know that it is better to be deceived in any worldly matter than in this.

Lastly, The ultimate and most compleat step of Church-Saintship in this life, is, *When we go beyond all the former, and are made partakers of the Spirit of God, in the powerfull renovation of us, so that from that holy, and new creature within us, our lives and actions are made really and solidly holy.* And this is indeed the true and proper Saintship, to which only the promise of Justification and Glorification is made. So that if thou didst enjoy the greatest Church-priviledges, yea, and the most admirable gifts therein; yet if destitute of this Saintship, thou art but a tinkling cymbal, and the hottest place in hell will be filled with such seeming Saints.





## SERM. XX.

*External Holiness is not enough to bring us to Heaven, without the inward renovation of the Heart.*

2 COR. I. I.

*With all the Saints, that are in all Achaia.*

External holiness & Saintship is not enough to bring us to Heaven, without the inward renovation of the whole man.

**W**E have heard what is the last and ultimate step in *Church-Saintship*, without which all the former, though they be in themselves great mercies, yet because we take them in vain, do become in some respect in the number of those, whom God will not hold guiltless. They are (I say) in themselves great mercies. For when we are thus called by God, unto the external means of holiness, there is some hope, and a possible way for salvation, whereas without this, there is necessary destruction. It is here, as in blind *Barthimeus* his case, *Mark* 10.49. for when Christ commanded him to be called to him, presently some said to the blind man, *Be of good comfort, he calleth thee*; that was a good encouragement, Christ called him: so whereas there are many thousands in the world that are left alone in their state of darkness, but he vouchsafeth the means of grace to thee. We may say, *Be of good comfort, there is some hopes, Christ calleth thee*; yet because many are called, and of those many called, few are chosen, therefore this external holiness and Saintship is not enough, unless there be the inward renovation of the whole man. Unless thou art holy inwardly, as well as outwardly, this will make to thy greater condemnation. That therefore which is the essential form, and gives a constitutive being to *Church-Saintship*, is *Regeneration*, or the work of grace upon a mans heart. Indeed to an external state, and visible condition of Church-holiness, a profession of faith, with submission unto Christs wayes is enough; but that which maketh us indeed members of the body of Christ, and invests us with right to all saving benefits, that is only this inward real Saintship. And to clear this more, you must take notice;

Propositions clearing the assertion,  
1. There are degrees even in real Saintship.

First, *That even in real Saintship there is a great latitude and difference.* All are not Saints alike. The Scripture speaks of *babes*, of *young men*, of *old men*. It speaks of some that are *spiritual* and *perfect*; others are *imperfect*, and even *carnal*, 1 Cor. 3. comparatively: so that we must alwayes distinguish between the truth of grace, and the degrees of it. A Saint is a Saint, though but a bruised reed, and a smoking flax. This is good to be observed, that we may not judge of Saintship by such degrees, and high attainments, but by truth and sincerity. No, there will be alwayes difference both in *Illumination* and *Sanctification*, and that amongst the Saints themselves. And this should teach a mutual bearing and forbearing of one another. Let not him that is *strong*, who doth farre surpass others, though true Saints, in gifts and graces, despise and



and contemn such as are below them, to judge them no Saints, or not godly at all. That there is such a disposition even in grown Saints, appeareth *Rom. 14.* where the Apostle giveth several Rules to strong Christians, especially, *That they judge not, or despise him that is weak;* and one reason amongst others is, *Because God hath received him.* If therefore he be one, whom God hath received, for whom Christ died, though subject to many weaknesses and infirmities take heed of contemning him. Such a supercilious, censorious spirit, is farre from the Spirit of Christ, who when he saw one not farre from the Kingdom of Heaven, though not yet in it, yet it's said, *He loved him,* and encouraged him.

Hence in the second place, *This real Saintship is alwayes growing, and ought to be more and more proficient continually.* It is an high delusion to dream of such a perfection, that they are above Ordinances, that they are of so full a stature in grace, that one cubit cannot be added to them. This is to let the Devil get thee up to the pinnacle of the Temple, and then to throw thee headlong into hell; yet such sad delusions have been on some, that coming to the Sacrament, they have said, They have had as perfect love as Christ himself. But this is against the continual current of the Scripture, which presseth to grow in grace, to bring forth more fruit. And *1 Cor. 7.* to perfect holiness in the fear of God. Paul himself, though a Gyant, to us Dwarfs, yet *Phil. 3.* Accounted not himself to have apprehended, but forgot what was behind, and pressed forward to the mark. Cloppenburge a learned man thinketh, That even Christ himself did feed and nourish his soul by meditating on Gods Word, and that in the use of the Sacraments, his faith was more confirmed, for to go through that work of redemption for us. This may seem hard to affirm of Christ, who had the Spirit without measure. But it is very true of every Saint on Earth, though never so exalted and enabled by grace, that he needeth the Ordinances, that he is to perfect and fill up that vacuity and emptiness, which is in him; so that he may say with *Ignatius*, when going to be sacrificed for the truth, *Nunc incipio esse Christianus;* I do even now begin to be a Christian; to be a Saint, I am but a babe yet, I am but a beginner yet.

Thirdly, *This Church-Saintship therefore doth consist with many imperfections and weaknesses, so that we need a constant and daily remission of sinne through the blood of Christ.* This is greatly to be observed, because some have dreamed of such a perfection in this life, that if not alway, yet for some time, we may be without any sinne at all; and therefore they tell us of Saints in the Church which need no pardon or forgiveness; as if to be a Saint in the Church, and a Saint in Heaven were all one: but our Saviour in directing all to pray for the forgiveness of sin (I say all that are to pray, are to pray so) doth plainly confute this. And the Apostle *John* saith, That if we say we have no sinne in us, we deceive our selves; and indeed we sinne in saying so. And this is the more to be observed, because the dear children of God think this title of Saint too glorious and great to apply to themselves, who are compassed about with such infirmities. How can I be called a Saint, and yet so dull, so sluggish, so froward, earthly, and often disordered in heart? But you are to know, that though Saints, yet we are not to be justified by our Saintship; we need the imputed righteousness of Christ, to cover the imperfections of our Saintship; yea some have not lost their Saintship, and yet have fallen into foul sins for a season. *David*, *Peter*, and others, did not cease to be Saints in those sad falls, though their holiness was drawn inward, and as the juice of the Tree in the Winter, was hid in the root under ground; but these Suns were not alwayes in an eclipse, at last they did recover to their greater advantage in holiness, and to be a pillar of salt to all other Saints, *Nor to be high-minded, but fear.*

2. Therefore is real Saintship alway growing in this life.

3. Church-Saintship though real consisteth with many imperfections.



4. Holiness or Saintship is the conformity of the will of man to the will of God.

Fourthly, *To be a Saint is a denomination from our conformity to the will of God, as a rule of our lives.* So that if you ask, What is it to be a Saint? It is to be *one born again by the Spirit of God, making the word of God to be the rule of all his actions.* So that Gods Word must try, whether thou art a Saint, or no? not thy own thoughts, or the applause of others can make thee a Saint, but thy life regulated by Gods Word. The *Papists* cry up their Saint *Francis*, whom they equallize to *Christ* in many things; but his Saintship must be tried, not by his voluntary poverty, or strict observance of humane traditions, but by a consonancy to Gods Word. Thus who ever is cried up for a Saint, still we must examine, How doth the Word, and his life agree? Is he as it were a *walking Bible*? Doth he will what that wi's, and nill what that nilleth? And this further also may inform us, That we are not to make a man a Saint, because of a particular opinion, in some way of Church-Government; as if none could be Saints, but of such an opinion. For the word *Saint* denoteth, *One made holy by the Image of God restored in him*; though he may differ from another Saint in a Church-way. For although it be our duty to study out the mind and will of *Christ* concerning Church-order, and with his Institutions only we may expect his gracious presence, yet such is the corruption and weakness upon the understandings of the best, that though Gods Spirit will lead them into all necessary truth, yet they may fail in some accessories, and so one Saint may differ from another, yea and write against another; though such things do prove, as *Calvin* said of *Mac-lanibhons* difference from him, *Pessimi exempli*, of *very evil example*, and confirm the adversaries of godliness in their dangerous prejudices against it.

These things thus laid down, let us consider, Why all the fore-mentioned steps of a *Church-Saint* are nothing without the latter. To be a Saint by the outward Covenant, by dedication to God, by outward profession and vocation: Yea, to be a Saint, having some works of Gods Spirit on us, unless we be born of God, and so have holy Natures, holy affections, and an holy conversation; it's to be like the *foolish Virgins, who have lamps, and those lighted, but want oyl*. Let us therefore consider, What may provoke us to be Saints indeed. And

'Tis a great shame and reproach to have the name without the nature of a Saint.

1. *What matter of shame and reproach is it, to have the name of a Saint only, and nothing else.* Thy life, not the life of a Saint, thy words, thy actions, not the expressions of a Saint. Is not this ridiculous, even as when they called the *Blackmoors* *ἀπαργ*, *silver white*? Thou art a Saint in that sense he said, *Auri sacri fames*; indeed thou art most accursed, and art but a mockery in respect of God and man. As it is a shame, so it is an horrible reproach; even as *Revel. 2.* there is the *blasphemy* of some, *who said they were Jews, and were not*. Thus it is a blasphemy in thee to be externally a Saint, and not really; as the Apostle, *Rom. 2. 24.* speaking of such, saith, *The Name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.* The mischief of the scandalous, prophane lives in the Church, hath been the cause not only of Gods eminent judgements upon it, even at last to unchurch them, but also hath been like winds in the bowels of the earth, making a dreadfull earthquake. Heresies in Doctrine have not more molested the Church, than prophaneness in life. The troubles of the *Donatists* made in the Church for many years together, was it not because of the prophaneness of Christians lives? In our dayes, What is the great argument against our *Churches*, that they are *no true Churches*, that they are the *Synagogue of Satan*? Doth not this arise wholly from the ungodliness of most mens lives? Call such Saints; you may as well name *darkness, light*. Yea, what is the cause that the bringing in of any good Order in a Church, the purging out of the old leaven, is such a grievous tormenting matter? Why do generally people dislike and rage at it? Is not all this, because though men are contented with the name of a Saint, yet they cannot endure the practical power of it? So that we may say, the real ungodliness of such who are in the Church, is the cause of all the evil that comes in the









## S E R M. XXI.

*Wherefore 'tis a Christians Duty to joyn himself to Church-society ; And in what cases he may be excused ? What are the false Grounds why some neglect this Duty ? The Soul of the poorest Saint is to be regarded, as well as of the richest.*

2 COR. I. I.

*With all the Saints that are in all Achaia.*

**I**T is now full time to conclude this Text. There remain two things more which deserve some consideration :

The first is occasioned by Calvin's Question upon the place, *How is it* (saith he) *that he distinguished Saints from the Church ? Did not these Saints imbody themselves, that lived in the Province of Achaia ? Was it lawfull for them to live dispersed, and single lives, not entring into Church-communion ?* To which he answers, *That the times might be then so turbulent, and persecution so hot, that they could not gather into a Church, nor have any such publick meetings.* Now this Interpretation is not necessary. For the Apostle writing to the Church at Ephesus and Colosse, yet doth not use that name, but speaks in the general, *To the Saints and faithfull Brethren*; when yet without question they were in a Church-state there. Yea in his Epistle to the Romans, he makes no mention of them as a Church, but styleth them *Saints*; which puts Salmeron upon his guesse, Why he doth not give the name of a Church to them? As also, Why he doth not salute Peter their supposed Bishop? Neither may we think that when James and Peter inscribe their Epistles, to the *Believers scattered in several Regions*, but that they might have occasionally their publick meetings to worship God in. Yet though this Exposition be not necessary, we may well receive Calvins conjecture as probable. For there have been times when the Saints have been forced to hide themselves in Dens and Caves, not having opportunity to meet together, though even that was an heavy burden, and trouble to them. This being granted, we may observe,

Saints may sometimes have just reason not to joyn themselves to a Church, though it be their duty all-ways to endeavour it.

*That although it be a Duty for Saints to joyne themselves in a Church-way, yet there may sometimes fall out such just reasons that may excuse them.*

Indeed



Indeed voluntarily to keep off from the Assemblies, and to think a private worshipping of God is enough, and that he requireth no more, is both against Scripture-command, and the example of primitive Christians, but when there is some unavoidable necessity, than there is a lawfull excuse, *That it is a duty for Saints to joyn themselves in a Church-way*, may be made evident from these Grounds briefly:

Reasons convincing it to be each Christians duty, to be of a Church.

First, *From the name Church ordinarily given to believers.* Now a Church is a Society or Company met together; and therefore it is not lawfull for thee to live alone, or be a Minister of Sacraments, and all things to thy self. Even as *Aristotle* said of him, that would live alone, not joyning himself to any humane Society, he must be *ant Deus, ant Bestia*; It is applicable here, he must be made even like God; that needeth no growth of grace; yea, that is above all duty or homage to God; or else a very beast, one that hath no sense or feeling about a God, and his Worship. The synonymous names also to a Church, doth evidence this; They are called *Christs body*; now it's necessary for the members of the body to be joyned together, else there cannot be that mutual help and furthering of one another. They are also called an *House*, and a *spiritual Building*, wherein they are to be as *living stones*; and such must be close, and well compacted together.

Secondly, *From the communion of Saints*, which is a duty so often prescribed in Scripture; such as to *watch over one another*, to *provoke one another*, to *comfort and rebuke*, if need be. Now how can this be, if Saints be dispersed from each other?

Thirdly, *From the Officers and Ordinances which Christ hath commanded*, that do necessarily inferre Church-Assemblies. For Pastors and Teachers are appointed to preach the Word, to be constant therein: And how can that be, if there be not publick meetings?

Fourthly, *The Sacraments likewise*, do not they seal, not only a communion with Christ, but also with one another. So that it would be a sacrilegious violation of Christs command, for a man to receive the Sacrament alone. The Protestants do justly condemn those *Private Masses* in Popery, as ridiculous and contrary to the Institution of that Sacrament.

Fifthly, *The examples of Christians*, who upon their conversion are recorded to joyn themselves to the Church, and they continued together praying, and breaking of bread. Yea, in the Old Testament, we see still, there was a constant, publick meeting to worship God: and *David* professeth his joy in those solemn meetings, as also his resolutions, *To praise God in the great Congregation*. And certainly, as by these solemn meetings God is more honoured; therefore the glorified Saints in Heaven are said to be a Church, *Heb. 12. 23.* so God hath promised to such meetings an higher degree of his presence, *He delights to be in the Assembly of his Saints*. So that these publick meetings are for our spiritual good, as well as Gods glory.

Though this be so, yet there may be some Cause that may justly excuse us. As

First, *Publick and violent persecutions*, as have been many times in Gods Church, then they have not been suffered to have either publick or private meetings. *Heb. 12.* The Apostle mentioneth such times, when he speaks of some, *Of whom the world was not worthy of*, yet were not allowed a place in the world, but were as so many beasts chased up and down, living in dens and holes of Rocks. Thus it was also once with *David*, when banished out of *Judea*, though this was a sad affliction, and he doth in several *Psalms*

What are the causes that may justly excuse us from joyning ourselves to publick meetings.



bewail his exile from the Ordinances, more than any temporal mercy whatsoever; neither his countrey or outward accommodations do fit so upon his heart, as that I cannot enjoy God in his Ordinances, as I have done. So then, though they were not actually in any Church-communion, yet because of their desire and wish, they were to be as accounted of it.

Secondly, *It may so fall out, that there be such a malice and poison in the hearts of those that do govern and rule in the Church, that they will excommunicate and cast out those that are true believers from the Church, and will not let them have any Church-society.* Now in such cases, if the godly cannot obtain any publick Church-priviledge, which yet they desire, this will lie on those that cast them out, *Luke 6. 22. John 16. 2.* Our Saviour tels the Disciples it shall be their portion, *They shall be cast out of the Synagogues*, separated from company, even as they did a blind man healed, confessing Christ, whom yet Christ met and encouraged. This then is no new thing. Yea Bernard complained in his time, *Heu Domine qui sunt in Ecclesiâ primi, sunt in persecutione primi.*

Thirdly, *If there be such a general and universal pollution, that a Christian at least for the present knoweth not what Church to join to, where he can have communion without partaking of gross Idolatry.* It's a Rule avouch'd in the Canon-Law, *Causa, non separatio facit, Schisma.* Those that would not bow their knee to Baal in Elijah's time, were not Schismatics; for there was a just cause to refuse such Idolatry; if then it be truly with a man, as it was in supposition with *Elijah*, that he is left alone, Idolatry hath filled the whole Church visibly; in such a case, though that be hardly to be seen, he is to abstain from Church-societies, till God make way for it. For then it is, as if a Christian, should by some accident be cast upon a Countrey of Infidels and Pagans, as some Christians have been, there cannot be had any Church-society at all.

Lastly, *The Church of God in the primitive times, when many Heathens, and Infidels were converted, had this custome, which I find commended by most; and that was, before the Church would receive such converted Heathens into an actual Communion with the Church, they took time to instruct them, and to try whether they were fit for that Sacrament, or no; and when they were prepared, then they received them.* These were called *Catechumeni* and *Competentes*. They were truly members of the Church, as the Protestants maintain against Bellarmine; only they had not as yet the actual admission into it. This custom in Antiquity of admitting none to Baptisme, but such as were instructed, doth hold by proportion for the Lords Supper likewise. Seeing now that all are baptized in their Infancy; and whether Parents have done their duties, or that they have sufficient knowledge to come to a Sacrament, may justly be questioned, when we see so much gross ignorance in the Christian Religion abounding every where. Therefore in Antiquity there was Ecclesiastical Confirmation, which was to make search and trial about the knowledge and sufficiency of such, who had been baptized; and if found duly qualified, then they were confirmed. Such care did they use in Antiquity about those that were admitted to Church-society, insomuch that *Casaubon*, a man of famous learning, saith, It had been well in the Church of God, if men had laid aside many unnecessary disputes, and endeavoured to bring in that holy and godly order, the primitive Church had, especially about the Lords Supper. And *Calvin* speaking of this custom of Confirmation, before it was so horribly depraved by after ages, and made a Sacrament, wisheth it were brought into the Church of God again, as that which would make parents more diligent, who now think the institution of their children doth not belong to them; neither would there be



be such ignorance and rudeness in people, as now there is. *Instit. lib. 4. c. 19. Sect. 13.*

In these cases a Saint without Church-communion may be excused. But then there are sinfull and unjustifiable grounds of some persons, who do not joyn themselves to any Church-society, and that may be either from a *Corrupt Opinion*, or a *Corrupt Heart*, though they seldom be separated from one another.

First, *From a Corrupt Opinion*: As, 1. Of those who call themselves *Seekers*, confessing they cannot yet find a Church, to which they may joyn. For they affirm, *That since the Apostles' dayes there are no Churches, and therefore till they can see Apostles, Apostolical gifts and miracles, with the like effusion of the holy Ghost upon persons, they cannot own any Church.* But this is against those Texts of Scripture, which speak of a perpetuity of the Ministry, and the duty of receiving Sacraments, till the coming of Christ, which could not be, if there were no Church.

2. Another corrupt opinion is, of those who call themselves *high Attainers*. These make themselves above the Church-ordinances, they need them not; yea some *Anabaptists* in Germany made themselves above the Bible, living wholly upon spiritual revelations, and called those, who would cleave to the Scripture as a Rule, *Creaturists*, as depending upon a creature. But the Scripture and Ordinances are necessary to quicken grace in the most holy; and there are none so spiritual, but they need them daily to comfort or instruct them; yet such have their publick Assemblies, wherein they deliver their opinions to be received. But if people ought to be above all Ministry and teaching, then also above theirs. And certainly, if those places of *being taught of God, and having an unction which teacheth us all things*, be against our Ministry, it is also against theirs.

3. There may be a corrupt opinion, which though it be not against Church-communion absolutely, yet they judge it *Arbitrary*, and *not necessary*. Of this opinion *Grotius* seemed once to be; for he is thought to be the Author of that Book, which asserts, *Quod non semper communicandum per symbola*; and *Rivet* in his *Dialysis* against him, chargeth this upon him, that he was not a member of any Church, acknowledging it a just hand of God upon him, that at his death, when a Minister was brought to him, he was wholly senseless: So that he who in his life time cared not for Church-communion, could not have any benefit by a Minister of the Gospel at his death.

4. The last corrupt opinion, by which men may not joyn to a Church, may be from a *superstitious conceit*, whereby men thinking it impossible to have salvation in the world, have imprisoned themselves, as it were, in Cells, and holes of Rocks, thereby to give themselves wholly to divine Contemplation. Thus the *Monks*, *Eremites* and *Anchorites* of old. For though some of the most ancient are excused, as being driven thereunto by persecution, yet the latter seemed to be transported wholly with superstition; and therefore in that they lived solely, not coming to the publick Ordinances of God in a Church way, it was not justifiable by Scripture. Indeed if they took their times, to come to publick Societies, and receive Sacraments, as *Rivet* affirmeth against *Grotius*, *Dialys. pag. 106.* pleading their example for being of no Church, then they are to be excused *à tanto*, though not *à toto*.

The second unlawfull ground of keeping from Communion with Church-assemblies, is, *A prophane Atheistical disposition*, that look upon a Church, and a Church-assembly, as humane devices, to keep men in awe; or if they be not so eminently *Atheistical*, yet their love to their lusts and pleasures, to the world and contents thereof, make them weary of the *Sabbaths*, and *publick Ordinances*;

2. Unlawfull grounds upon which some do not joyn themselves to any Church-society.

1. From corrupt opinions:

2. From corrupt dispositions.



ces; as those in *Amos 8.5*. *When will the Sabbath be over, that we may set forth wheat to sell?* How many are there that come as seldom as ever they can to these publick Assemblies, and when they do come, it's but for custom and fashion, not that they ever found any spiritual good, or expect and desire any?

Use.  
Of Instruction

Therefore let the Use be of *Instruction*, that as ye are not to rest in any Church forms, or external Communion, to think that the very bodily doing of them will save you. So on the other side, Take heed of voluntarily, and wilfully neglecting the publick Assemblies. How have the godly, when banished and driven from them, bewailed their misery, whereas thou dost voluntarily absent thy self? Think how it may lie upon thee at thy death, when thou shalt remember the many Sabbaths, the many Ordinances thou hast neglected; and now if God would give thee but one day, or one hour to make thy peace with him, thou wouldst judge it a great mercy.

The second Observation is from the *Universality*, *All the Saints*. There are none so mean, so inconsiderable, but this Epistle is directed to them, as well as the most eminent. From whence observe,

The soul of  
the poorest  
Saint is as  
much to be  
regarded, as  
of the greatest.

*That the soul of the poorest and meanest Saint, is not to be neglected.*

That as the rain falleth upon the least spire of grass, as well as the choicest flowers; so ought all ministerial planting and watering to be to the meanest plant in Christs garden, as well as the chiefest. Though Christian Religion doth not abolish civil Polity, nor the distinctions and relations of Magistrate and Subject, of Master and Servant, but strictly enjoyneth their respective duties; yet in respect of religious considerations, all are but as one. Thus the Apostle notably, *Gal. 3.28*. *There is neither bond or free, male or female, but all are one* (mark that) *in Christ*. Christ looketh upon all as one man. And certainly, if Christ in shedding his blood for his people, had an equal respect to the meanest with the greatest, he died for the godly servant, as well as the godly master; the godly poor man, as well as the godly rich man; Then it becometh all Christians to imitate him in this. Whosoever is a Saint, though he be never so contemptible, do thou own and embrace such; else we do not love the brotherhood, we do not love a godly man, because he is godly, but because he is great or rich, or may advantage thee in the world. *Paul* will not except, or leave out one of the Saints in all *Achaia*.





## SERM, XXII.

*How Grace and Peace, and such like spiritual Mercies and Priviledges, are to be desired before any temporal Mercies whatsoever.*

2 COR. I. 2.

*Grace be to you, and Peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

**H**itherto we have considered the *Inscription*; we now come to the *Salutation*, which is in these words, and it containeth matter of prayer. It is not any earthly or temporal mercy he prayeth for, but what is heavenly and spiritual. The Apostle *Paul* doth constantly use this Salutation; only in both those Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, which were Church-officers, he interposeth *Mercy* between *Grace* and *Peace*. *Calvin* thinketh he putteth it in his Salutation to *Timothy*, because of his dear affection and love to him; but why should he do it to *Titus* also? Certainly it ought to be considered, that only to Church-officers he useth this Salutation. Some think, because the work of the Ministry meets with much malice and froward opposition from wicked men, which made *Paul* pray, that God would deliver him from unreasonable, absurd men, who are led only by humours and passions, not by Reason and Religion. Therefore seeing those that do faithfully discharge their trust, meet with little favour and love from men; hence it is that he doth in a peculiar manner pray for *mercy* to them. Others they think the word is inserted, because of the great difficulty of the Ministry, it being a burden too heavy even for *Angels* shoulders: Insomuch that *Chrysostome* thought, *Few Church-officers could be saved*. Seeing then the work is so great, so much grace is required to manage it, and the best have failings, therefore they need the mercy prayed for. But this by the way.

Come we to the Text. In that we may consider, the *Matter* prayed for: And the *Efficient Cause* from whom it is to come. The *Matter* and *Benefit* is set down in two words, which though but two, yet comprehend all that a godly heart can desire; the first is *Grace*, the second *Peace*. In the original there is a defect; and therefore most do supply it by *etc.*; as our Translators, *Grace be to you*. Though the Apostle *Peter* in the salutations of both his Epistles, expresseth the word, and that is *πληθυνειν*, *Be multiplied*; and so *Estius* would supply it here: but there is no inconvenience to keep to the former Interpretation.

2. There is the *Cause* of this, which is two-fold, *God our Father*, and from the Lord *Jesus Christ*. All these parts shall be opened, as we take them in order; only let us first take notice of the *Manner* and *End* of this Salutation in the



the general, That it is not for any earthly or worldly thing, but what is spiritual. The *Grecians* they used commonly *χαῖρεν*, *ὑγιαίνον*, and *ἐννεύρεται* in their Salutations, as the *Latines*, *Salve*, and are relating only to temporal welfare. And indeed the *Heathens* knew no better; but the Apostle would lift up our hearts to higher things. The Apostle *James* Chap. 1. 1. writing to the *dispersed Tribes*, useth the word only, *Greeting*; which made *Cajetan*, among other reasons reject it, as *not Canonical*, as it such a Salutation favoured of an humane spirit: But this is no Argument. For the Apostles gathered together in a Council at *Jerusalem*, sending a Letter to the Churches abroad, use no more Salutation than that; only in that we are to comprehend, whatsoever is more expressly in *Pauls* Salutation. Seeing then its only spiritual things which *Paul* here doth wish to them. Observe,

Spiritual mercies are to be desired before temporal.

*That spiritual mercies and priviledges are to be desired above all earthly and worldly ones whatsoever.* ○

The Grace of God, and Gospel peace is infinitely to be preferred before any outward advantage. *Psal.* 4. 6, 7. when *David* had represented the natural desire of every man unregenerated, *Who will shew us any good?* He presently demonstrates the clean contrary disposition of those that are godly and spiritual, *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us; and, Thou hast put more gladness into my heart, then they have had, when their wine or oyl increaseth.* By *David* you may judge of all the faithfull; they esteem more of the love of God, and the sense or perswasion of this, more than the whole world. Let the prophane brutish men of the world say, as some did in *Chrysostomes* time, whom he reproveth, *Give me that which is sweet, although it choke me:* So let me have my pleasures, my lusts, though they damn me. The godly on the other side, if raised up to this heavenly transfiguration, as it were, to have the *spirit of Adoption*, enabling them to call God Father, and to walk under the light of his grace and favour, they will say, *It is good to be here.* So that the desires and earnest longings of mens hearts do divide the world into two parts; Some, and they are only few, who with *David* say, *As the Hart panteth after the water-brooks, so do their souls after God.* Yea, *Their souls break for the longing they have to God at all times.* But then others, they seek the things of this world in the first place; Let them have their pleasures, their wealth, their honours, then with the *Reubenites* they will sit down, and go no further, because they see the Land is a good and pleasant Land, never desiring to go into *Canaan*.

To open this Doctrine, consider,

First, *That all the while a man is meerly natural and dead in his sins, he is not affected with, nor can he desire any spiritual mercy.* Even as dead men are not affected with pleasant sights, or melodious sounds. No wonder then, though we do out of the Gospel shew such all the glory of Heaven, yet they will not fall down and worship Christ, because they are no wayes sensible or apprehensive of a better good. Can a *Worm* that crawleth upon the ground live the life of an *Angel*, or a *man*? Alas, that knoweth nothing, but to crawl on the ground, and feed on the dust of the earth. Thus it is with every carnal man, speak to him of the favour of God, of the light of his countenance, he knoweth no more what you mean, than the brut beast doth what reason is. Besides, sinne hath so infected and polluted the heart and appetite of every natural man, that he calleth good, evil; and evil, good; he takes sweet for bitter, and bitter for sweet. That as the Swine loveth to wallow in its mire, and delighteth in that, more than in the sweetest garden that is: Or, as they say of those blind Beetles that live in muck and dung, but sweet things do presently kill them; thus it is with



with every natural man, he is not only not affected, but he is contrarily disposed to heavenly things, *Rom. 8. The wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God.* The wisdom, the best understanding, parts and knowledge that he hath, is as full of malice against holy things, as a Toad of poison. The Greek word doth not only signifie his intellectual, but his practical wisdom and affection; he doth not say, He hath savoury knowledge of heavenly things (*Sapientia est sapida scientia;*) And as Bernard, *Sapiens est cui res sapiunt, prout sunt.* Heavenly things savour as heavenly; earthly things as earthly.) But in every natural man his appetite and taste is wholly disordered, he finds no excellency, loveliness in heavenly things, which yet to a gracious heart are matter of exceeding delight and ravishment.

Hence in the second place, *Till a man be regenerated, till he be made a new creature, and endowed with an heavenly heart, he is no futable subject for these heavenly things.* Every one then as he is affected and disposed, so he judgeth; if earthly, then all his affections move that way; if heavenly, then they are turned the contrary way. As you see in mixed and compounded bodies, what element doth most predominate, accordingly is their motion, either upward or downward; now in this regenerate person, his nature is now changed, and he hath a spiritual resurrection, that as the body, when that shall rise, will lose its gravity and burdensomeness; for we shall meet the Lord in the Air, even with our bodies. So the soul in this life made partaker of a spiritual resurrection, hath cast off those burdens and clogs, that did press it down to the creature, and ascends up to communion with God and Christ.

And besides this general Cause, there are some peculiar qualifications, which provoke the godly man to esteem the Grace and Peace of God above all things As,

1. *The sense of the sting of sin, and the bitter guilt thereof, is that which makes a man go out of himself and all creatures, to have some supply and comfort.* Alas, the soul thus broken and contrite for sinne, is like that diseased woman, that had spent all she had upon Physicians, and yet she was as bad as ever, till Christ cured her. So that the grace of God, and Gospel peace is the only oil, that can be poured into this wound. Come to a David, who complaineth, *God had hid his face, yea his bones were broken,* and all his desirable things perish; and tell him, while thus affected, That he had a glorious Kingdom, many outward mercies and delights he might rejoyce in; What good would this musick do to his sad heart? Oh it's something else that must cure him! No creature, no wealth can do it, but peace from God; and this made him, while in those conflicts, but getting some victory, breathe out so affectionately, *Psal. 32. 1. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth no sinne;* not blessed is he who hath the good things and pleasures of the world, who liveth at his hearts ease, but whose sinne is pardoned. Thus the guilt of sinne maketh him esteem Grace and Peace.

2. *Those spiritual desertions and temptations, which sometimes the dearest of Gods children feel, do make them esteem of the favour of God, the possession of that more than any thing.* They sit as Rachel, refusing to be comforted, till they have obtained this. How precious was the presence of Christ to the Church? When she had lost him, then she will hold him, and not let him go; as the night, or the eclipse maketh the Sunne more precious. Where there is nothing but sense of unworthiness, what is more welcome than grace? Where there is a desert of hell and damnation, where the soul hath cause to expect nothing but the frowns and vengeance of God, there to meet with grace and favour: Oh how welcome is this! Thus the heart which hath continual fears, tumult and warre within it self, to have peace, and that with God; such a peace as no outward misery can take away; What unspeakable refreshments are these? It is these dark

What are those things that peculiarly move the godly to preferre spirituals before temporals



dark and cloudy thoughts, that make the least beams of Gods face shining upon them more than all the enjoyments of this world.

3. *The experimental taste and sweetness, which they have of heavenly things, maketh them undervalue all things else.* If the Prodigal after he had eaten of the fatted Calf, and been refreshed in his fathers house, had returned again to his husks, how unsufferable had it been? This aggravated the Israelites ingratitude, that after they had eaten *Manna*, they should desire the *garlick of Egypt*. The Apostle Peter, 1 Pet. 2. 2, 3. exhorting them, to desire the sincere milk of the Word, to be as much affected with it, and delight in, as children with their milk, he addeth, *If so be ye have tasted how good God is*; implying, that this tasting, this experimental trial of the goodness and grace of God in Christ, is that which will make them still long for more and more of God. It's no wonder, that natural men are never affected with these Gospel-promises, they never knew better, they were never acquainted with better, and therefore they cannot desire it; but thou hast known how good God is, thou hast had the first-fruits of Heaven and glory upon thy soul, and therefore thou dost still importune for more, and desire more of Gods presence, never saying, *It is enough*.

The Reasons  
of it.

In the next place, Let us consider the Reasons, why the gracious heart doth thus desire heavenly things above all outward advantages whatsoever. And

First, *Because these spiritual objects have only universal sufficiency and fulness in them, to satisfy and content the heart.* If God be reconciled, if he be our God, what then can be wanting to our happiness? Thus David acknowledged, when he said, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and none in earth in comparison of thee?* And Psal. 73. how contented and happy is he, in having God his God? The creatures they are but as a drop, they have only a limited goodness, but God is the ocean, there is nothing wanting. Hence it is, that because the glorified Saints have a beatifical vision of God, therefore they cannot sin, they cannot immoderately desire any thing else.

Secondly, *These spiritual mercies they are everlasting and eternal.* If the Apostle had wished honours, wealth, long life to them, yet all these would have been but for a moment comparatively, they could not have continued with them alwayes, whereas the favour of God, and the effects thereof, they are to all eternity: whom God taketh into his favour, he never casteth out. How many men have been in grace and favour with the Potentates of the world, yet at last cast off, and ended their dayes tragically? *Haman* may be a constant instance of the inconstant grace and favour of men; but whom God receiveth into this favour, he will never abhorre again: Such gifts as these, are without repentance. Oh then press hard for this, use an holy violence for this! This will never leave thee, till it hath made thee eternally happy. The Manna that was gathered for any day of the week, would last but that night, but that which was treasured up for the Sabbath-day, would continue longer. Thus the things laid up for this life, they will quickly vanish, but what is in reference to Heaven, and our Sabbath or rest there, that will continue alwayes.

*Use of Instruction, To teach us what we are most to desire for our selves or others.* What should Ministers most wish for the people, even that they might have this grace, this peace in the Text? And you should above all things desire it for your selves: Oh then take heed of such wayes, such courses, as drive away Gods grace, and his peace! *What peace can there be (as Jeru said) as long as whoredoms were in the Land?* See that notable place, Isa. 57. 21. *There is no peace, saith my God to the wicked.* What canst thou expect Gods grace to pardon, while thou hast no grace in thy own heart? This also teacheth parents what they should in the first place pray for their children, as also friends for their acquaintance, even this grace of God. How zealous was Paul in desiring this for the Jews? We read of a notable expression, Epist. 3. of John ver. 2.

There



There he wiſheth *Gains*, as much health to his body, as he had in ſoul; How excellent was his ſoul, that was in better condition than his body?



## SERM. XXIII.

*Of the Name, Nature and Prebeminence of the Grace of God above all other things.*

2 COR. I. 2.

*Grace be to you, and Peace, &c.*

**T**He next thing conſiderable in theſe words, are the *particular mercies* prayed for in this Salutation. The firſt whereof, and that which is the efficient cauſe of all other things, is *Grace*. The Common-place in Divinity, *De Gratia Dei*, of the grace of God, is of a very vaſt extent, and moſt of the *Popiſh*, *Arminian* and *Sacnian* errours, ariſe from the miſtake of the uſe of this word in the Scripture; but it would be impertinent to graſp that whole controverſie. I ſhall not treat any more of it, then what may relate to this Text.

We may therefore briefly take notice of the uſe of it to our purpoſe, That the firſt and moſt principal ſignification of it, is the *favour and mercy of God towards us*; for it answereth the Hebrew word *Che*, which comes of a root that ſignifieth *to have mercy*. So that when the Scripture ſaith, *We are juſtified by grace, we are called by grace, we are ſaved by grace*. The Popiſh party doth groſſly erre, taking grace there for ſomething in us wrought by the Spirit of God, whereas it is indeed without us, even the Attribute of mercy and grace in God. So that the meaning is, We obtain ſuch glorious priviledges, not becauſe of any thing in our ſelves, though never ſo holy, but becauſe of the meer *grace* and favour of God without us. *Grace* then in the moſt frequent and principal ſignification of it, denoteth the favour and goodneſs of God. But then

In the ſecond place, It is uſed ſometimes for the *Effects of this Grace*. For as *mercy* is ſometimes taken for the attribute in God, and ſometimes for the effects of it: So likewise is *grace*. Hence it is that *Gods grace*, is ſometimes put for the *Gofpel*, and the preaching of the Word. This being meerly from his grace, that he vouchſafeth ſuch a mercy to his people, *Aſt. 20. 24. Tit. 2. 11*. Sometimes it is taken for the good ſucceſs and ſpecial aſſiſtance that God giveth unto the preachers of it, *Aſt. 14. 26. 1 Cor. 15. 10. Yet not I, but the grace of God, viz. aſſiſting and giving ſucceſs to my miniſterial labours*.

Again, It's applied to thoſe common gifts of Gods Spirit, which were ſo wonderfully vouchſafed in thoſe dayes, *To ſpeak with tongues, to work miracles*, theſe are called the *grace of God*; though ſome would diſtinguiſh between *charisma* and *charis*, *1 Cor. 3. 10. 1 Pet. 4. 10*. Yea the very function and offices in the Church are called Gods *Grace*, as *Paul* did his Apoſtleſhip, *Rom. 1. 5*. becauſe it's the meer *grace of God*, that hath appointed ſuch Offices in the Church.

Laſtly, That which the *Roman Church* makes the more ordinary ſence; that indeed is ſometimes, but ſeldom to be found in Scripture, *viz. to ſignifie thoſe habits and principles of holineſs, which are within us*. There are ſome indeed, who



who say, The Scripture never useth the word *Grace* in this sense, but some places seem to be clear, *Col. 3. 16. Col. 4. 6. Heb. 13. 9. 2 Pet. 3. 18.* And therefore we may truly call that work of God in us *Grace*, so that we do not make it to justify or save, for that is the grace of God without us. Observe,

The grace of God is to be desired before all other things.

*That the grace of God is to be desired by every one, in the chiefest and first place.*

This we should earnestly pray for, that whatsoever God would deny us, yet that he would give us his *grace* and *favour*. We are (I say) to desire it, not only above all temporal and earthly comforts above riches, honours and long life, but even above the sanctification and holiness of our souls, which God worketh. We are to desire his grace, more than grace in our own hearts; for this is the effect of that, and this alone being imperfect in us, could not justify or save us. Let us discover this rich treasure of Gods grace, though the Apostle *Ephes. 2. 5.* calls it, *The exceeding riches of his grace*; so that we can never speak to the full of it, though we had the tongue of men and Angels, still there is more in the grace of God, than we are able to fathom. We must therefore speak and understand as children about it, till in Heaven this imperfection be done away. And

Propositions discovering the nature of the grace of God.

First, *We must know, that God hath several attributes tending to the same thing, yet do notionally differ.* There is his *Goodness*, whereby he is willing to communicate of his fulness to the creature. Thus he was good to *Adam*, making him so glorious a creature. There is his *Mercy*, and that is, whereby he pitieth his creature, being cast into misery. There is also his *Patience* and *Long-suffering*, which is extended to sinners that do for a long time rebell against him, when he could, if he pleased, destroy them every moment in hell. And lastly, here is this property of *Grace*, whereby he is called a *gracious God*: And this the Scripture doth speak of, as the most glorious and comfortable attribute; and that doth imply these things:

What the grace of God implies.

1. *That whatsoever good God doth bestow upon us, it cometh solely and originally from his meer bounty and good pleasure.* So that there is nothing in us, that may in the least manner, either merit with God, or move him to be thus gracious. So that we can never hear of this word [*Grace*] but it should presently humble and debase us, it should make us condemn our selves, and give all to God. For if it be of *grace*, than there was no motive in us, God out of his own bowels doth this for us, *Rom. 1. 5, 6.* The Apostle speaketh very fully to this, *If of grace, than it is not of works, otherwise grace is no more grace.* So that to acknowledge the grace of God, as *Pelagians* were forced to do, and so *Papists* and *Arminians* do, yet at last to divide between *grace* and our selves, to make us *co-workers* with it, yea to make it effectual; this is to take all away really, that we had given verbally before. So that if it be Gods grace, we must not give so much as the least sigh and desire to our selves; all cometh meerly from the good pleasure of his own will.

2. *Grace doth not only thus imply a pure and only original from God himself, excluding us, but it supposeth also a manifest unworthiness in us, and a contrary desert to what God bestoweth upon us.* Therefore *grace* in the Scripture language supposeth *sinfulness* in us, that we deserve to be abhorred, and cast out of Gods presence. Hence justification and pardon of sinne are attributed to the grace of God, because we by our sins might justly have expected Gods vengeance, and his condemnation. So that the word *Grace* is still to debase us more and more in our own eyes. For it doth not only proclaim, that all cometh meerly from God, but also that we are wretched sinners, who have deserved the anger and frowns of God, when now we have the light of his countenance. To

*Adam*



*Adam* God was very bountifull, and full of love; yet some Divines say, That we cannot call that *Gods* grace to him, because *Adam* was not in a sinfull and contrary estate, deserving the wrath of God.

3. *This* grace of God is more especially demonstrated in those effects which relate to the happiness and blessedness of the soul. Therefore it's the grace of God in calling and justifying us, in sending his Sonne to redeem us, in vouchsafing Gospel-mercies to us. In this the grace of God is made most apparent; and this should reach us, what we should prize most, what we should be affected most with, even these spiritual mercies. The Scripture doth seldom or never call it, the grace of God, to give us wealth, health and temporal mercies; these are not worthy to be mentioned, when we speak of Justification, Remission and Salvation; and yet how carnal and corrupt are we? We desire the grace or favour of God, for our bodies, for outward happiness; but who is sensible of the need of Gods grace in this spiritual manner? Thou canst not therefore argue Gods grace is to thee, because thou livest in prosperity. and hast what thy soul can desire. For these may stand with Gods anger and wrath, thou mayest be a fire-brand of hell, and one prepared for destruction for all this. Oh then be sensible of that which the Scripture attributeth to Gods grace, but none save an holy, heavenly heart can do this!

4. *This* grace is communicated to us in and through Christ. So that it is called in Scripture, *The* grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, in a two-fold respect, 1. *Efficiently*, because he is able to bestow it upon us. You see in the Text *Paul* prayeth it from him, as well as God the Father. And, 2. *Meritoriously*, because Christ by his blood hath made a way open and free for grace to manifest it self. Oh then, let us know, that without Christ, God is a consuming fire, a condemning Judge; that there was no more possibility without him, to have so much as a drop of grace, as there was for *Dives* in hell, to obtain a drop of water! No, no, there was too great a gulph between God and us. Indeed the *Socinians* they blaspheme and say, *If* we hold the merits and satisfaction of Christ (they say) *this* overthroweth the grace of God, making it none at all. What grace is it (say they) for God to forgive and pardon, when he receiveth full satisfaction for it? But though it be of Justice to Christ, yet it is meer and only Grace in respect of us, and that many wayes, but especially in these two particulars; 1. *That* God was not bound to take a Surety for us; he might have stood for satisfaction in our own persons; that we who had sinned should also be punished. And then, 2. *Although* this price be paid, yet the application of it, is wholly of grace. For how many are damned? How many have no sinne forgiven, or pardoned to them, although Christ came as a Saviour into the world. It is therefore meer, and only grace to make thee partaker of this grace, which cometh by Christ. God is gracious, but Christ made way for it.

5. *Gods* grace therefore is the same, with that which the Scripture calls the light of his countenance; Which is an allusion to men, who when they were pleased, and delight in any, they look in a smiling and chearfull manner upon such. Thus it is with God, when he is reconciled through Christ with those that are his, he doth presently cast away his anger, doth no longer turn his face from them, abhorring and loathing their persons and duties; but he accepts of them, looketh upon them with delight: Insomuch that the Scripture makes this to be the utmost blessedness, that a godly man can desire to have, *The* light of Gods countenance shining upon him, to be under his gracious favour, as you see by *David's* earnest petition for it, and the sad troubles and distresses, which were upon his soul when he hid his face from him. So that to partake of Gods grace comprehends all the comfort, glory and blessedness we can desire.

6. This property of God, of being gracious, though it hath alwayes been to the Church since *Adam's* fall, yet it hath broken out by degrees: Insomuch that the

How grace is called the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.



the Gospel time is the time of grace in a more eminent manner. *Abraham*, and *Noah*, and *David*, these were all justified by *grace*, as well as we, though in Christs time this glorious light break out into its full lustre. God telleth *Moses*, *Exod. 22. 27. He would hear the cry of the oppressed, for he was gracious.* And *David* often, *Psal. 86. 15. Psal. 111. 4.* doth acknowledge this comfortable property in God, that *he is gracious.* So that in the old administration, though every thing was more covered and obscure, yet then it was the *grace of God alone*, that they made their refuge; yet this was so dark comparatively, that the Evangelist saith, *John 1. 17. The Law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ;* as if those former dispensations were not dispensations of grace. Hence the expression is, *Tit. 2. 11. The grace of God hath appeared,* viz. in a most visible, irradant manner, that our eyes are dazzled with it, as when the Sunne shineth in its full strength at noon-day. So that all those Doctrines, which in these Gospel times do obscure the grace of God, are more intollerable, than those who pleaded the Law, and the works of the Law in former times.

7. Let us consider, *What are the opposites to this grace of God; or, What are those sinnes that do keep off this grace of God from us.* For though this Sunne shine never so gloriously; though this Ocean be never so full, yet if we shut our eyes, or wilfully stop the streams of this fountain, we shall not receive any good by it. And there are these remarkable sins, like so many opacous bodies, that do interclude this grace from us. I shall not meddle with Doctrinal opinions, but practical indispositions. And

1. *He who seeketh to be justified by the works of the Law, by his external obedience thereunto, he will never come under the sweet benefit of Gods grace.* A man that is fully confident in his own righteousness, and the good of his own heart, will alwayes be neglective of the grace of God. You may see this largely by those arguments the Apostle hath in his Epistles. A *pharisaical spirit* is alwayes an adversary to *Free-grace*; but oh the proneness in all to this sinne, especially men civilized, and meerly moralized, that are kept from the gross pollutions of the world! You may as soon remove the earth, as such, from their supposed righteousness. The Apostle speaketh it as the general sinne of the *Jews*, *Rom. 10. 2. That being ignorant of the righteousness of God, they went about to establish their own righteousness.* They would faine set up this *Dagon*. This is the sweet poison, that is the death of so many; *Intus existens prohibet alienum.* And when the sensible object is put upon the sensitive faculty, it cannot perceive. And hence it is that there are very few, that do indeed admire and set up this *grace of God*. If the Prodigal had fared as deliciously every day, as *Dives*, he would never have desired his Fathers house.

2. Another indisposing thing, to esteem of the grace of God, is the consequent of this, *When men are not sensible of original corruption, in the efficacy of it, when they do not see or feel how miserable they are.* These two go alwayes together; he that maketh nothing of original sinne, hath also as low and flighty thoughts of grace. You see it in *Paul*, while ignorant of this, what high and great thoughts he had of himself; but when once he came to be *anatomized*, when once the dark corners of his soul were made known, then who did more long for, and breathe after the grace of God than he?

3. A third indisposition, which is a natural consequent of the former, *Where there is not poverty of spirit, brokennesse of heart, and thereby an hungry and thirsting after the grace of God.* With such also this hath no precious acceptance, *Matth. 11. 28. Come unto me ye that are heavy laden, and I will ease you. Ho, every one that thirsteth, Come,* saith Christ. But alas, where are these tender, contrite, and hungry Christians? No marvel that you see so few crying out, *Oh, if we could have the light of Gods countenance, if we could*



could but feel the grace of God shining upon us, we would not matter any outward condition whatsoever! Such flowers as these grow but in few places. Christ and his grace are not importunately desired and wrestled for in prayer, because so few are of a contrite heart.



## SERM. XXIV.

*Who are fit Subjects to partake of the Grace of God. As likewise Rules and Scripture-characters of the Grace of God, by which we may rightly understand, and judge of it.*

2 COR. I. I.

*Grace be to you, &c.*

**W**E have heard, That the grace of God is the *chiefest* and most *eminent* mercy that we can desire, either for our selves, or others. We have been informed, who are those *capable and fit Subjects*, that may partake of this grace of God. There remain some more *Qualifications* to be insisted upon. And

Who are fit  
subjects to  
partake of  
Gods grace  
without.

First, *Such only partake of Gods grace without, who have true inward sanctifying grace.* For although it be true, that the grace of God without us, is to be preferred and esteemed above all inherent grace, yet these are inseparably conjoynd together. None can claim Gods grace, and plead the mercifull effects thereof, but such who have this testimony, and evidence within. It is true, this grace (as is to be shewed) maketh way for it self; and begins the first stone in this spiritual foundation: but then the subsequent effects of this grace, are only to those, who have the inward work of it upon their own souls. And this must be diligently observed, that so wicked and ungodly men may not think to taste of this tree of life: What hast thou to do, to speak of Gods grace, to hope in Gods grace, who hast no grace in thy heart? Think not, that God will extend it to such as thou art; for then it would be such grace, as would encourage to sinne, and embolden in evil wayes. Then we might truly take up that resolution, which the Apostle with so much indignation rejecteth, *Let us sinne that grace may abound.* No, the whole word of God speaketh *no grace, no peace to a wicked man.* It's not the grace of God, but the anger, the fury, and the wrath of God to such persons. Hence *Exod. 14.* even at that very time, when God is pronounced gracious and long-suffering, it is added, *who will in no wise acquit the guilty;* yet who can keep off these swine from running into this sweet garden? Let them live graceless persons, yet for all this, they presume God will be gracious to them. But be not deceived, Gods word is not a lie; thou wilt find the issue to be, as that speaketh. And although thou mayest



est for the present have much outward prosperity, many temporal advantages, yet the curse and anger of God may be upon thee all the day long for all this. *Dives* had great store of earthly benefits, but needed as much a crum of Gods grace, as it were, as *Lazarus* did a crum of bread from his Table. Therefore judge thy condition, though overflowing with many outward comforts, no better than an hell, till the grace of God be dispensed towards thee.

Secondly, *Those only are preparrd to enjoy this grace of God, who do exercise faith in the promises of the Gospel.* For faith is like opening of the window, that lets in this glorious light upon the soul. The grace of God is no otherwise communicated unto us, but by believing, *Job. 1. 12. To them that did believe, he gave them power to become the Sons of God. Rom. 3. 24. Justified freely by his grace, through faith in his blood.* So that faith is the hand to receive this precious pearl. And for this reason it is, that Gods children are no more filled with this grace; it doth not like oil runne into all their wounds, because by unbelief they shut up their souls, and make sad obstructions unto this grace of God. Oh then, if thou who art truly godly walkest in a dejected manner, saying with *David, Hath God forgotten to be gracious?* Know God is as gracious as ever, yea and as willing his grace should overflow to thy soul, but thou art unwise and froward; thou doest not set upon this great work of faith, which is the key, as it were, to open these treasures of Gods grace. Know then, that so much faith as thou bringest, so much of Gods grace thou shalt partake of. And therefore it is, That to be *justified by faith, to be saved by faith, and to be justified by grace, or saved by grace*, is made all one by the Apostle, and he argueth from one to the other; and this way of Gods grace, with the manner of receiving, it cometh wholly by revelation. It's alone by the word of God, that we come to know God to be so gracious; and it's alone by the same Word, that we come to know what faith is, and how by that only, and not working, we do receive of this grace. No wonder then, if the troubled and humbled sinner be so long ere he comes to be replenished with this grace, that he keepeth constantly in fears and doubts; for till he put himself upon this way of faith, there is not the least cranny in his soul, wherein the least glimpse of Gods favour can approach unto him.

Thirdly, *Such are capable subjects of Gods grace, that are affected thankfully with the least discoveries and manifestations of it to the soul.* The Sunne is not more welcome to the world, than the grace of God to a broken, contrite heart. If then the soul come to taste of the sweetness of it, both heart and mouth will overflow in the acknowledging of this grace. And indeed therefore doth the Lord do all out of grace to us, that as the Apostle saith, *We might be to the praise of the glory of his grace, Ephes. 1. 6. And that we should shew forth the praise of him, who hath called us out of darknes into his marvellous light, 1 Pet. 2. 9.* So that there is nothing so comely and beautifull for a soul partaking of this grace, as to be calling upon his soul, and all within him to praise God: Yea, because he cannot do it enough, to call upon all other creatures, Angels and Saints, that they would joyn with him in this work. And certainly the dullness and negligence of the godly is much to be lamented in this very particular. *David* discovered this, when *Psal. 103. he calls upon his soul to blesse God*; and in other places, *Psal. 18. 2. Awake psaltery and harp, I myself will awake early.* Why then is it thus with thee, that in temporal mercies and deliverances thou art so cordially sensible of them? If God of weak and sick, make thee healthfull; if he recover thee from the gates of death, if he bless thy outward estate, so that thou art freed from the former streights and perplexities thou wert in: If (I say) God do thus for thee, thou lovest to take notice of it; thou canst with tears and joy speak of Gods goodness to thee herein; but for those great and unspeakable riches of his grace, in calling of thee, and justifying of thee, in beginning of  
grace



grace in thy heart; these things thou dost not meditate of so affectionately as thou oughtest to do. How farre otheawise was it with *Paul*, whose heart was like a fountain never dry, but did alwayes stream forth abundantly in blessing of God for those spiritual mercies. Certainly were *this grace of God* rightly considered by us, it would put us into holy ravishments, it would take us off from all worldly comforts or discontents. The soul possessed with thankfull thoughts about this *grace of God*, will be even in Heaven it self. Indeed we should account this our meat and drink, and our only blessedness. Oh then abhorre thy self, for not being ravished more with this *grace of God* to thee! Say, Lord, what a stone, what frost and ice am I? yea worse than they; for *David* calleth upon them to glorifie and praise God, and they do it in their kind; but I am forgetfull and dull in this blessed work, which is the only duty to be done to all eternity. It may be then thou feelest no more of this grace of God, because thou art no more thankfull for the present enjoyments of it; and it argueth thy heart not only too dull and sluggish, but too earthly and worldly, that thou dost not bless God in the first and chiefest place, for the workings of his grace towards thee.

Lastly, *Such only are capable of the benefits of this grace, who do not abuse it, or turn it into occasion of sinne.* The Apostle *Jude* 4. complaineeth of some, who did turn the grace of God into wantonnesse. And the Apostle *Paul*, Rom. 6. 1. speaketh of some, who encouraged themselves to sinne, because of Gods grace. Oh take heed of falling into this *Libertinism* and *licentiousnesse*. As the sweet and comfortable showrs of *April* breed frogs and other vermine, as well as pleasant flowers: Thus the grace of God, when falling into a broken humbled soul, makes him more godly and holy; but dropping on the wicked and carnal heart, it pampereth him, and nourisheth him the more in his sinnes. How many spiders get poison out of these sweet flowers? How many do encourage themselves in their prophaneness, and go boldly on in their manifest impieties, hardening themselves with the thoughts of Gods grace? Thus whereas bitter pills, the judgements of God would have consumed their lusts; those sweet and comfortable things of Gods grace, do more confirm them in their impieties. Oh take heed of being wicked, because God is gracious! For thou wilt find, though he be infinitely gracious, and that to great sinners, when repenting and humbling themselves, yet to such as abuse and turn his grace into an occasion of sinne, the hottest flames of his anger will fall upon such.

In the next place, Consider some *Rules*, how rightly to understand and judge of this grace of God. And

First, *You must know that there are those who extremely erre about the grace of God, and yet are directly opposite to one another.* The *Pelagian*, the *Papist*, *Arminian* and *Secinian*; all these do more or lesse diminish, and nullifie the grace of God. For howsoever they have many plausible and specious distinctions, by which they would evade to be thought enemies to Gods grace, yet unless we give all to grace, we make it no grace at all. *Austin's* known assertion is very true, *Gratia non est gratia ullo modo, nisi sit gratuita omni modo.* The *Pelagians* of old did deceive the Eastern Church, by granting, That all those were to be anathematized, who did not hold the grace of God necessary to every good work: And the *Papists* with the *Arminians*, do carry it so speciously, as if they indeed did set up grace more than their Adversaries. Let not therefore every one that speaketh of grace, be presently accounted Orthodox, and to endure the Scripture-proof and trial. Again, on the other side, there are *Antinomians*, who do erre grievously, though they only would be thought to admire free grace, condemning all as Legal Preachers, and of an Old Testament spirit, that do not speak of grace, as they do. Now God is so gracious these tell us

Rules how we may rightly understand and judge of the grace of God.



to his people, *That he seeth no sinne in them, that he doth not afflict for sinne.* They tell us of such a grace, That God looketh upon us, as if we were Christ himself, and that he doth this from all eternity: That *Paul* before his conversion, while a persecuter and blasphemer, was as much in the love and grace of God, as after his conversion: That the vilest and most wicked of men, even while they are so, are to receive Christ as a Saviour: That neither sinnes or good works do at all inarre, or make our peace: That faith justifieth only declaratively, by manifesting unto us, That God did from all eternity justifie us. These and such like poisonous tenents they affirm, and this (they say) is to preach *free grace.* Thus you see the *grace of God* may be opposed on the right hand, and on the left.

Therefore in the second place, take this Rule, *That we must not exalt grace according to our own fancies and opinions, making such a grace as we would have, and then go to the Scripture to confirm it; but the word of God must be the alone Rule in this case.* So that by the Scripture alone, we shall not give too little, nor on the other side attribute too much to it, making Gods grace to be such a thing not indeed as it is, but such as we would have. It is good therefore to attend to the Scripture, and to lay all our own thoughts and all humane Authorities aside, that so the Scripture grace of God may be found out.

The Scripture  
characters of  
the grace of  
God.

Now these Characters we may have of that grace the Scripture commends in God:

1. *That the Scripture-grace doth begin all the good in us.* We do not prevent God, but he prevents us. Thus our Saviour, *You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you: We love him, because he loved us first.* So that the word of God doth still resolve the original of all we have into this *grace of God*, as *Rom. 9.* and *Rom. 11.* *Ephes. 1.* Whosoever therefore makes something in us to begin, and then Gods grace to be subsequent; he setteth not up grace in a Scripture-way. Therefore there are no antecedent merits or dispositions in us, for which God doth afterwards bestow his grace upon us. The very first desire, inspiration, and least unfeigned groans after Christ is from this *grace of God.* Therefore the beginnings of what is good, is attributed to God, as well as the progressives, yea the initials most of all, because then we were dead in sin, and in a state of enmity against God.

2. *The grace of God which the Scripture commends, as to our Sanctification and conversion is not meerly suatory, and by moral arguments; or in an universal, indeterminate and ineffectual manner, till we by our freewill consent to it; but it's a grace that takes away the heart of stone, and giveth an heart of flesh; it's a grace that gives a new birth, and maketh us new creatures.* Which expressions do suppose, that we had not so much power, as to consent unto grace, till grace doth enable us. It is a grace that giveth us *both to will and to do.* It's a grace that makes us to be what we are, and so to differ from another, whereas if we did co-operate with grace, or make Gods grace effectual, then it would be we our selves, and not Gods grace that should make this difference.

3. *The grace of God which the Scripture commends, as to our Justification is imputed grace, not inherent,* evangelical grace which justifieth us, is external, though by faith received into us, and made ours. And this is greatly to be observed, for what godly man, when he goeth for Justification and consolation, doth not more attend to inherent grace, than imputed? This truth is the very heart and marrow of the Gospel. It is about this that there is so much doctrinal and practical contending, Whether grace inherent in us, or imputed to us, be that which we must rest upon, and lean upon, when God enters into judgement with us? We say only *imputed grace*; others say, *inherent*; and that because the Apostle excludeth works; not only meritorious work, but godly



ly works, works of grace done by us. And here now the Adversaries seem to insult, saying, The Apostle excludeth works only of *the Law*, such as are done by our natural strength, or perfect works, or works that merit; but this is to distinguish where the Scripture doth not; and whereas it is said, that the works of grace cannot be opposed to grace, because they flow from it, they are effects of it. It's answered, that works of grace cannot indeed be opposed to that principle of grace within us, from whence they are said to flow; but they are opposed to that grace, which is said to be the effect of them, *viz. Justification and remission of sins*. So that though *works of grace* do not oppose *internal renovation*, yet they do justification, which they say is produced by them. Again, whereas they say, That none extoll grace more than they do, because they make grace inherent to make us accepted of with God. Whereas the Protestants debate it, denying it this noble work. For (say they) will not grace be most advanced in Heaven, when we shall be justified by that perfection of holiness which is within us? But to this also it's answered, That it's *imputed grace*, which is *Evangelical grace*, and that we are to exalt in this life. In Heaven indeed this *Evangelical* and *imputed grace* will cease, though all glory will be given to that, because by it we are brought to perfect inherent grace.

Lastly, *The Scripture-grace*, though it be not for good duties, yet doth alwayes require the study of them, and diligent attending thereunto. So that as we must not with the *Papist* make our duties thrust out *grace*; so neither must we with the *Antinomians* make *grace* to thrust out *duties*, for both these do consist together. Therefore as the Scripture speaks of Gods grace, so it doth also of those holy duties, which if we do not diligently perform, we cannot have any portion in everlasting happiness.

*Use of Admonition*, To pray for that spiritual wisdom, that we may joyn Gods grace and our holiness, to be conscionable in performing of the later, but to relye only upon the former: Especially take heed of such wayes and courses that shall put thee out of this warm sunne, that shall make thee to walk in darkness, not feeling the comfortable beams thereof. Oh remember, it is this alone, that makes life and death comfortable! It is true, thou mayest be under this grace of God, yet by some cloudy temptations upon thy soul thou not be able to perceive. Oh but let thy earnest prayer be, That Gods grace may not only be to thee, but this may be evidenced to thee. Thou canst never have true solid peace, and quiet contentation of soul, till this be all the food (as it were) thou livest upon; till this be all the cloaths thou coverest thy nakedness with.





## SERM, XXV.

*Of the Nature of true Gospel peace, and wherein it chiefly consisteth.*

2 COR. I. 2.

*Grace be to you, and Peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

**W**E are now come to the second thing, which the Apostle doth so cordially wish these *Corinthians*, and that is *Peace*. *Grace* is the Cause, *Peace* is the Effect. *Grace* is the fountain, *Peace* is the stream.

This word *Peace* among the *Hebrews*, comes from a root signifying, *to be whole and sound*, because by *Peace* they did mean all good and prosperity, as by *Warre*, the *Hebrew* word coming from a root, signifying *to eat and devour*, they meant all misery and destruction. And among the *Hebrews* this was their ordinary salutation and greeting, *Peace be to you*, intending thereby all prosperity and happiness: And so some expound it hereby *Peace*, understanding a prosperous and successfull proceeding of all their affairs: But though this is not to be excluded, yet we take *Peace* in the same sphere with *Grace*; and as that did relate chiefly to spiritual things, so also must this *Peace* in the Text.

By it therefore is meant, *the fruit of Gods grace and favour*, viz. a quiet, serene, and calm, joyfull frame of soul arising from the sense of Gods peace through Christ, whereby we walk comfortably, boldly, and not daunted under sinne, afflictions, or death it self. A most blessed and choice mercy it is, putting a believer into an Heaven, while he is on this earth, his heart keeping (as it were) a perpetual Sabbath and rest within. So that whensoever the godly find diffidence, fears, disquietness, perplexities, troubles and dejections of soul; all this ariseth because this peace doth not prevail, and keep all under in our hearts. This *evdoxia*, this *Peace* and tranquillity of spirit, some Philosophers, especially the *Stoicks*, did greatly aim at, and accounted it the *chiefest good*; but being ignorant of Christ and faith in him, they took the shadow of it for the substance. Observe,

Peace from God and Christ is earnestly to be prayed for, as a very choice mercy.

*That peace from God and Christ, is earnestly to be prayed for, as a special and choice mercy.*

To have an heart so evangelically affected through the apprehension of Gods love, as a Father in Christ; that as the young child can sleep sweetly and safely in its mothers arms: So can we as boldly and comfortably by faith throw our selves into the bosom of our heavenly Father. Oh, why are there such tormenting fears, such tumultuous conflicts, such warres and confusions in thy soul, when such a priviledge as this may be obtained at Gods hand?

But



But to direct you to this Peace, which is a *spiritual Philosophers stone* turning all into gold; if we have this peace, then they are afflictions of peace, exercises of peace; yea death is peace then. This quiets and composeth all.

Let us first take notice of the nature of it briefly. And

First, *This peace lieth in the favour and grace of God, so that his anger and wrath, because of sinne, is wholly removed.* For where Gods wrath is upon a man, where his face is set against him, that man hath no peace, *Isa. 57. 21. There is no peace, saith my God to the wicked.* Therefore though wicked men are for a while in carnal jollity, and in much security, crying, *Peace, peace to themselves,* as *1 Thess. 5. 3. even then destruction shall suddenly surprize them.* The very Hea-then could say of a wicked man, That though he might be *securus*, yet he was never *urus*: Though he might cast away all care and fear, bidding his soul, as *Dives*, to take its ease, yet he is never safe; for in the midst of this security, he heareth that dreadful voice, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be taken away.* Let then the wicked men tremble and quake like *Belshazzar*, for they may see, not one, but many hand-writings, not in a wall, but in the word of God, foretelling them without repentance of their certain damnation. This peace therefore begins first in Heaven, and so descends into a mans heart. God removeth his anger, because of our sins; he is become a gracious and reconciled Father, and hence we have peace. Therefore *Rom. 5. 1.* it is called, *Peace with God*; in-  
somuch that if we had peace with all the Potentates of the world; if we had peace with the world, which yet Christs Disciples shall never have, yet this is nothing to *peace with God*. For how many have ventured to obtain outward peace, as *Spiras* and others, by breaking this peace; and thereupon have plunged themselves into a very Hell? What peace can any in the world give thee, if God cause his anger to break out against thee?

Wherein this peace consisteth.

Secondly, *This peace, as it doth consist in reconciliation with God, so also it hath the sense and perswasion of this, it brings a man to some comfortable knowledge and evidence of this.* For although Gods anger be removed, our sins be forgiven, and on Gods part all controversies are removed against us; yet if we do not know this, if we are not assured our hearts are as much troubled and disquieted, as if God indeed were our adversary. Hence it is that the Spirit of God is sent into our hearts, enabling us to call God *Abba, Father*. For if we could not do so, it would be as the Sunne, though it casts forth glorious beams of light, yet a blind man, because he cannot see it, it is all one, as if it were midnight: so unless the Spirit of God doth make thee to discern those gifts of the Spirit in thee, as by the light of the Sunne we come to see the Sunne: so also, though God be our Father, though we be his dear children, yet if we are not assured of this, still this peace is not in our hearts; it must be therefore in Gods favour, and our assurance of this faith.

Thirdly, *This peace therefore is not procured or wrought by our own strength.* If we would give ten thousand worlds, when our hearts are scorched and burn like hell through the sense of Gods displeasure, we are not able to refresh our souls with one drop of it. That as all the men of the world are not able to make the Sunne arise, if God forbid it; Neither can the parched wilderness water it self, till God prepare clouds to empty themselves upon it: Thus it is with the humble contrite heart, praying, groaning, crying out for this blessed peace in soul: Alas it cannot come, till God command it. Therefore he is so often called, the God of peace, *Rom. 16. 20. Heb. 13. 20.* And peace is made the fruit of Gods Spirit, *Gal. 5. 22.* Hence it is, that the Apostle in this Text prayeth for it unto God, as knowing the *Corinthians* can never have it, unless it be given them from above. This therefore should our us of our selves, think not to have it by any works thou doest; think not outward advantages can help thee to it: No, it must



must be by a lowly humble dependance upon God, *Descendendo, in Cælum ascenditur.*

Fourthly, *As it is wrought by God, so it is purchased by Christ our Mediator.* For although he be also the efficient cause of peace, called therefore *Isai. 9. The Prince of peace*, and *The King of peace*, *Heb. 7. 2.* yet he is chiefly called *our peace*, because by him our peace is purchased, *Ephes. 2. 14. Colos. 1. 20.* Hence it was, that upon Christs birth those Angels sang, *Glory be to God on High, and peace on Earth, good will towards men.* So that had it not been for Christ living and dying to remove the curse of the Law from us, there had been no more hope of peace for us, than the Devils and damned in Hell. Though with *Dives* we had called but for a drop of water, yet the gulph being not removed between God and us, we could not have enjoyed it. It's then a peace through Christs blood; we have it at a very dear price: Hence *Isai. 53. The chastisement of our peace* is said, *to be upon him*, that chastisement and wounds which brought peace to us. And truly this is much to be meditated on. For what man considering his sinfulness, his unworthiness, can perswade himself, that God will have any peace with such as he is? Do we not see what a laborious work it is to bring the troubled and loaden soul to Christ for ease? How many times ready to despair? What constant qualms and swoons of soul? How often with the Disciples crying out, *I perish, I perish?* And is not all this, because they think their sinnes have so offended God, he is so provoked against them, that they can never obtain reconciliation? Doth not this proneness to unbelief and despair, arise from not considering, that the chastisements of our peace are upon Christ? Were we with our tears or graces, to work our peace, then our estate would be incurable? But Christ is our peace-maker; and if peace-makers among men are blessed, How blessed is our Lord and Saviour Christ, who made peace between man and God?

Fifthly, *Faith is the hand to receive and imbrace this peace; by believing we come to have this heavenly tranquillity.* Those that are strangers to this life of faith, are also strangers to this life of peace. *Rom. 5. 1. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.* It's faith that prepareth the way for peace, *Isai. 26. 3. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee in perfect peace, peace; peace,* as in the original, full and universal peace. But how shall he thus be kept? By trusting and staying his mind on God. So *Isai. 27. 5. God there inviteth men to believe, which is emphatically called, a laying hold upon God, Let him take hold on me, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me. Take hold,* as we do upon a man that is turning away from us, and seemeth to be offended with us; but we lay hold on him, intreating him to look upon us. This doth faith; and therefore by it we are said to *have boldness.* Oh then acquaint thy self more with this life of faith! If you see a tree wither in all its branches and boughs, it is because it dieth at the root: So if you see a Christian abating in his peace, in his joy, in his consolations, it is because faith is weak within. This is the breast that gives suck (as it were) to all the serenity we enjoy.

Sixthly, *This peace, as it is thus wrought by God in us, and received by faith; so it is conserved and preserved by an holy and diligent attending to the exercise of all grace.* For although a godly life be not a cause of this peace, yet it is alwayes conjoynd with it; and our negligence and ungodliness will be like an *Eclipse* to this Sunne, it will darken and obnubilate the whole soul. Hence this peace, and a wilfull course of wickedness can



no more stand together, than the Sunne and night. The Apostle Peter, 1 Pet. 1. biddeth us, Give all diligence to make our calling and election sure, which is, by adding of one grace to another. Hence Rom. 8. 6. To be spiritually minded, is laid to be life and peace. No wonder then if Gods own children do so seldom attain to a calm and peaceable frame; they are doubting and discouraged often; they are cast down and hopeles often; they are full of tormenting fears often; for whence is this? but because Gods own people are subject to dulness, slothfulness, they break their peace, they interrupt this communion, they do not keep the oil alwayes ready to keep the lamp burning. Oh then say to thy soul, why am I a man of so little peace within me? Why do I find like *Rebekkah* two struggling within me, faith against diffidence, joy against sadness, hope against fear? Is not all this from my own folly and vanity? The way then to keep this blessed peace, is to walk with all diligence in the whole course of all godliness.

Seventhly, *This peaceable calme, and joyfull disposition of the soul, is the proper effect and fruit of the Gospel.* This is the filial and Evangelical temper we under the Gospel, and the Spirit of Adoption, ought to walk in. We may stand and wonder to see, what great expressions Paul useth, Rom. 8. and in other places, concerning the love of God in Christ; how confident and assured of it, how triumphing over all difficulties, as if he were in Heaven already. For the glorified Saints can scarce say more than he doth. And this he speaketh, not in his own behalf, but in the name of all the children of God, they ought to have such peace, assurance, and filial persuasions, as he hath. Now alas, we are like worms crawling on the ground in comparison of him! We spend our dayes in tumults, fears and disquietness of heart: We are tossed from one temptation to another, and have not this peace, this joy unspeakable, this Evangelical persuasion, and why? but because the Gospel hath not had its full work upon us. Doth not the Apostle, 2 Cor. 3. and in other places, speak of the *Ministration of the Law*, killing and condemning? Doth he not speak of a spirit of bondage, and of servants as opposite to children? And as the immediate contrary to this, he tels us of the *Ministration of the Gospel*, and the Spirit of Adoption accompanying it, which Spirit we are to pray for; and are to be transformed more and more from glory to glory, by beholding of the glory of God revealed in the Gospel. Therefore Ephes. 6. 15. We are to have our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; We tread among thorns and briars. Now this Gospel munition is the only defence against all hinderances in our way to Heaven. Oh beloved, let us at last know, that the Gospel doth not only consist in an holy, exact, and humble walking, but in a chearfull, peacefull, and glad some conversation, arising from the sense of Gods grace to us in Christ. The Apostle speaketh fully to this, Rom. 14. 17. The Kingdome of God is not meat or drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Ghost. You see here the Kingdome of God is not onely in righteousness, but in this peace and joy. Did the children of God possess their souls with this truth, they would no more let in unbelief and discouragements into their soul, then they would the prince of darkness, and his Angels? Know therefore, that though thou hast lived so many years under the Gospel, yet till thou obtainest this peaceable calm frame of soul, coming from the love of God in Christ, thou hast not the Gospel-work in its full upon thee. Do not live as if thou hadst only received the Spirit of bondage to fear, but the Spirit of adoption and consolation also. And know this assuredly, That the more any Christian groweth under the Gospel, the more this dispensation affects him, the nearer in communion, and lovely imbracements by faith, he cometh unto God as a Father, being



being able to say with the Church, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine.* And *Cant. 8. 10. I was in his eyes, as one that found favour, or peace.* being conducted from one room of consolation unto another. As theretore thou desirest to answer the Law of God in holiness, and a godly walking, so conform thy self to the Gospel, by a peaceable and joyfull disposition. The Apostle saith, *Rom. 10. 15. How welcome are the feet of those who preach the Gospel of peace?* And certainly, there cannot be any truth in the world more precious and welcome to this indebted prisoner of sinne, who groaneth under the burden of it; then this year of Jubilee, this year of peace, and of a general releasment. *Matth. 10. 6.* Our Saviour instructs his Disciples, as they did go from house to house, preaching the Kingdom of Heaven, if they did meet with a *Sonne of peace, Peace should rest upon that house.* Oh that in our Gospel-Sermons, we did meet with these sonnes of peace, those hearers of peace, that so it might rest upon them! How can you be under the hot beams of this Sunne of righteousness displayed in the Gospel, and yet be so chill and frozen with fear and unbelief? How can ye be in the shop of this precious ointment, and you not be full of the sweet savour of it? Though the *Antinomian* abuse this precious Doctrine, crying down the preaching of the Law, and make all that do it to be legal Preachers: Shall we theretore cry down a Gospel-disposition? Neither of these is to be preached to the prejudice of the other.



## S E R M. XXVI.

*A further Discovery of the Nature of true Gospel-Peace, with the Effects of it; and some Directions how to attain it.*

2 COR. 1. 2.

*And Peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

**W**E are treating upon this admirable and unspeakable priviledge of *Peace from God.* It is a *Peace from God*, and it is a *Peace with God.* You have heard several particulars going to the constitution of it, there yet remain more.

In the next place therefore, *This peace here prayed for, is a peace in heavenly considerations, because our persons are justified, our sinnes are forgiven, therefore we have peace.* As *Rom. 5. 1.* there is an external worldly peace, which the natural men of the world only desire; let them live in peace and security, let them have the good things of this world, with the peaceable enjoying of them, this is the utmost of their desire, they think this is enough. We see this notably, *Ezek. 13. 10, 16.* where the people desire such Prophets only, that will prophesie of peace to them. Peace is so loved, that theretore wicked men do so extreemly hate the faithfull Messengers of God, because they *proclaim no peace to them;* they enform them of Gods wrath and vengeance against such; now this curteth them to the very heart: They delight only in such

*peacemongers,*



peacemongers, that though they go on in all wickedness and prophaneness, yet you must tell them all is well, *so pillows under their elbows*, that they may lie down in security. Men that desire to sleep, love not to hear any noise; but the *Peace* in the Text, is not bred from such base and low materials. When the wicked man is deprived of his pleasure, his profits, then all his peace is gone: but the godly doth many times partake in the most powerfull manner of this peace, when they are in the most afflicted and wretched estate, because this peace is within, and upon spiritual grounds. And therefore when the godly many times have most of outward troubles, they do richly abound with this *spiritual inward peace*. Hence it is that a gracious spiritual heart doth only prize it, and pray for it: The natural man not perceiving these things, which must be spiritually discerned.

Secondly, *Whereas a godly mans trouble may arise several wayes, this peace hath a proper antidote and cure in all these respects, from what causes a godly mans disquietnesse and fears may arise, from the contrary will his peace.* As for example, a godly man is very frequently disturbed, because of the sense of Gods anger for sinne, because he is not reconciled, such and such iniquities have provoked God to hide his face, and this filleth him with all bitterness; he will not be called *Naomi*, but *Marah*; but when this peace of God possesseth the soul, then all these dark thoughts do presently flie away, as when the Sunne ariseth, the night is dispelled. So that when thou thinkest of God, and art troubled; *Thy meditation of him is not, as Davids, sweet, but bitter*; this wholly ariseth from want of this peace, for that will confirm and settle the soul in all references to God, that will represent him to be a gracious reconciled Father.

What are the principal causes of a godly mans fears, troubles and disquietnesses.

Again, *A mans trouble may arise in his soul, from the temptations and oppositions of Satan, who when he cannot hinder Gods people in the exercise of their graces, will in respect of their comforts.* So that as the Spirit of God is the Comforter, one great work of his being to assure, to enable to call God Father: So the Devil he is the prince of darkness, and he counterworks Gods Spirit. As that is an *holy Spirit*, sanctifying his people; so he is an *unclean spirit*, provoking to all sinne. Again, as Gods Spirit doth comfort and convince us of Christs righteousness, being the Spirit of Adoption within us, to deliver us from *spiritual bondage and thralldome*: So the Devil he worketh oppositely to all this; he filleth the heart with sad and unbelieving suggestions; he endeavours to divide between God and us, to make us afraid of him, as being that severe Judge, who will not in any wise be reconciled. Thus he would perswade us, that it is with us, as it is with him, and that there is no more hope for comfort and salvation for us, than for him. But this peace of God doth abundantly fortifie against this temptation also; where this peace is, the Devil doth not find the house swept and garnished, but fortified and secured against him, so that he cannot have any entrance. This is the blessed effect of this *spiritual peace*, that it *overcometh the Devil*; he commonly entrencheth into the good tender heart by unbelief, by fears, by propounding doubtfull and anxious scruples, and then draweth us into a wilderness farre off from God: But this peace from God doth easily quench all his fiery-darts, doth presently stop his assaults, and maketh him not care for coming to us to grapple with us, while we have this spiritual armoury on.

In the third place, *Our disquietnesse doth many times arise from the reliques of original corruption within us.* The godly they find many sad discoveries and workings of the root of corruption within them: They find that their hearts are not in such an uniform and heavenly way, as they desire; they often come short of what they endeavour after. And seeing them-



selves thus foiled often by their lusts, they begin to be full of fears, and of all doubts; they question their own sincerity, and what Rock they are built upon; hereupon they are pierced thorow with many wounding apprehensions; and have no rest in their bones; but when this *peace from God*, doth begin to stirre in their hearts, then all these fears vanish: They see *peace with God*, and remainders of corruption may stand together, so long as they do not make provision for the flesh, or give themselves up to sinne willingly; but are captivated therein, so long Gods favour and love is not removed from them. This *peace* (they now see) is not bottomed upon a pure and perfect heart, free from any evil at all; for then no *David*, nor *Paul*, could have *peace*, but from the grace of God through Christ, mercifully forgiving those failings and imperfections which we are burdened with.

Lastly, *The godly mans peace is many times greatly interrupted from without, because of the hatred and malice of the world*: But *Christs peace* is an excellent antidote against that also, *John 14. 27. John 16. 33.* Christ there bequeaths his peace to them, and from this ground, *Because in the world they shall have trouble.* Let the winds and clouds be never so impetuous, yet they cannot molest the upper region, that is above their reach: So it is here, Let men and Devils set themselves against the godly with all their rage and madness; Let them revile them, imprison them, yea kill them, yet they cannot take away their *peace* from them. So that unless they could as *Balak* would have done, get God to curse his children: All the curses and violent oppositions of the world, are so farre from weakning, that they rather increase and strengthen their *peace*. Thus you see what large territories this *peace of God* hath, that it doth extend it self into large dimensions. And oh how blessed and happy is that man, who hath this *peace* compassing him about in every respect! This is not only *Peace, peace*, as *Isa. 26. 3.* but three or four times *Peace, peace*, from every side, from within and without. Why then is not the true believer more solicitous to possess himself of this crown of mercies?

What are the effects of this Gospel-peace.

Thirdly, *This peace of God, arising from Gods favour in Christ, hath admirable and sovereign effects, which may move us to the attainment thereof.* As

1. *Where this peace of God is, it will wonderfully compose and settle the soul.* This is the genuine, and immediate consequent of Gods peace in the soul; it putteth the whole soul into an excellent harmony. There are not those waves and tumults, those divisions and distractions of soul, which many times do greatly perplex the godly: Do we not see an universal want of this peace generally amongst believers? Whence arise those troubles, those concussions of soul? Why dost thou need so often to chide and rebuke thy self, saying, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou so disquieted within thee?* Do not all these things arise, because thy heart is not at rest and quietness within thee? The *Heathens* speak much of their *Socrates*, because he was noted to be alwayes; *Eodem vultu*, of the same countenance; if this were true, it did not arise from this *Christian peace*, but from some *Stoical*, or other *Philosophical principles*, which did speak much to this tranquillity of mind, but yet pleased themselves with the shadow, never enjoying the substance. *David* doth notably express the effects of this peace, *Psal. 48. I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep, because thou Lord alone makest me dwell in safety.* Likewise *Psal. 23.* we have a large description of a serene and pacified mind without any dividing cares of soul. As also *Psal. 112. 3.* his *Heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.* Thus this *peace of God* keeps all quiet, and subdueth all troublesome insurrections, and motions of soul. Hence *Colos. 3. 15. Phil. 4. 17.* this *peace of God* is said



said to rule in our hearts, and to keep our hearts, as an Army, Garison, a Strong-hold, so that none dare make any opposition, or resistance. Thus doth the peace of God, it is of such sovereign dominion in our hearts, that it keeps down unbelief, and all unruly passions of soul. Doe not then be a *Magor-missabib* to thy own self, when God calleth thee to peace, doe not thou set all at variance, and discord within thy self.

2. *This peace of God worketh as a consequent from the former, a gracious contentation of soul under all conditions and estates.* So that whatsoever befall him, he is the *Lapis quadratus*, he is built on a Rock, nothing can overwhelm his peace; grieved he may be, sadded he may be, because of some passages even from God against him, yet his peace he is never to let go, for that alone makes the soul contented. Though his conditions alter, and he is tossed up and down several wayes, yet because of peace with God, he can follow the Apostle Paul, and though with disproportion say, *I know how to abound, and how to want; I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me*, Phil. 4. 12. Whereas if this peace of God be taken from the soul, then is the heart of a man like one burning in an hot fever, tossing from one place to another, hoping to find some ease, but can obtain none.

3. *This peace of God filleth the heart with joy and boldnesse at the throne of grace.* For as when the Sunne ariseth, the dark clouds they are scattered; Thus when the peace of God doth shine into our souls, then the heart is filled with joy in the holy Ghost, 1 Pet. 1. 8, it is called *unspeakable joy, and full of glory*: Insomuch that such who live in this manner, have Heaven and eternal life already begun in their souls. It is not according to the Spirit of God, that thou shouldst be heaping up sad thoughts against thy self; Gods Spirit is a comforting Spirit, as it doth all in us for holiness, so also for consolation. It is not *Spiritus Calvinianus*, but *Papisticus*, that may be truly called *Melancholicus*; for the Calvinist Doctrine preacheth and presseth the assuring work of Gods Spirit to the soul, the certainty of perseverance to such who have been partakers of the least true grace; but *Popish* Doctrine and others commend doubtings, deny certain perseverance of the true Saints; and therefore upon this account, as well as for other reasons, they may be rejected, because they tend to the utter overthrow of the consolation of Gods children. Oh then know, that a spiritual life, is a life sutable to the Spirit of God, is a comfortable glad walking, as well as an holy, and a sanctified one.

Lastly, *Where this peace from God is, there is a greater incentive and quickning to all holinesse and godlinesse.* There the soul is carried out with more fervency and activity, scruples and dejected thoughts, they are like the taking off the Chariot-wheels; there cannot be such improved godliness, such zealous and laborious expressions of love and thankfulness to God, as when this peace of God ruleth in our heart. The fire doth not more easily dissolve the frost and ice, then this peace of God in our souls doth chase away all slothfulness and negligence; if this grace and peace of God were shed abroad in thy heart, thou wouldst like a *Gyant* runne thy race of Christianity, whereas now thou art but a *Dwarf*; feeble hands and weak knees will not go through much work, especially if difficult and laborious. Now the way of Christianity is compared to a race, to fighting and combating: there are thousands of discouragements and oppositions in the way; it becometh thee therefore to have this peace within, that so the work of grace begun in thee, may go on more prosperously.



Directions  
how to attain  
this peace.

But you will say, *This indeed is a mercy, like that Pearl in the Parable, we may well feel all to have it: But how may we be directed to obtain it?*

Take notice of these things briefly:

First, *Distinguish between carnal presumption, and this peace from God.* Many have been deluded by taking one for the other. The Jews and Pharisees did confidently boast in God as their Father, and that they were *Abrahams seed*; the *Covenants of Grace* did belong to them; yet who were further off from it than they were? When the Pharisees said, *Lord, I thank thee I am not like other men*; he might have boldness and confidence upon his soul; but yet here was no true peace. And thus there are many hundreds who have quiet, still, and it may be feared, *stupid* consciences: Now these find no trouble, no aches, or pains of heart, because of sinne, but thank their good God, all is well with them, when yet alas they are miserable, being upon the very borders of Hell, in which they may fall every moment.

Secondly, *Take heed of living in sinne, or omitting of those Duties God requireth of thee.* For although these be not the cause of this peace in thee, yet without these no peace can either be obtained or preserved. This is to be throwing water upon the fire, till it quite go out.

Thirdly, *Perswade thy self of those Doctrinal Truths against the contrary Errors, which help to establish this peace:* Such as the Nature of *Justifying Faith*, in the particular application of it; as also, not only the possibility, but the duty of *Assurance*; the certain, and *unchangeable love of God*, to all those who are his; as also the *acceptableness of such a quiet and joyfull spirit unto God himself.*

Fourthly, *Regard Gods promises as well as precepts.* Look upon the Gospel as well as the Law; let not one destroy the other, but make them to be subservient in thy whole life.

Lastly, *Pray much for the Spirit of Adoption.* For it is not thy own power, or meditation upon all the Rules that Ministers may give, which will give this peace of God; till the Spirit of Adoption doe reigne in thee.

SERM.





# SERM. XXVII.

Of the Names of God; 'tis he alone who can give Grace and Peace to his People. He is a Father to all Believers, even the weakest as well as the strongest.

2 COR. I. 2.

From God our Father.

**W**E have dispatched the choice and special mercies here prayed for; we now come to the *Original and Spring of them*; The *Efficient Cause*, who alone can vouchsafe this to us, and that is two-fold, God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us consider the first, and there we have a description of him,

1. Absolutely, God.
2. Relatively, a Father.
3. The Community of this to all Believers, or the Extension of it, *Our Father*.

Of the names attributed to God in Scripture.

We shall dispatch all these particulars briefly.

The first head, is the absolute consideration of God, expressed in the word *Gods*, whether that word come from *fear*, or to *runne*, or to *behold*, is doubted of. In the *Hebrew* there are several Names given to God, in somuch that the *Rabbins* call him *Hasbem*, the Name. Whether God himself revealed his Name to *Adam*, or *Adam* imposed a name upon him, it is hard to determine. This is certain, that the Scripture names do very emphatically represent the Nature of God, especially those two *Jehovah* and *Elohim*. The word *Jehovah* is commonly rendred by the *Septuagint* *θεος*, yet in the New Testament, Christ is commonly called *θεος*, and God the Father *Θεός*, especially when named together, as is to be shewed in the verses following.

*How many things to place or found all things.*

Now of these two mentioned words, one in the *singular*, the other is in the *plural*, which doth denote (especially having light from other places of Scripture) that there is *One Divine Nature*, and *Three Persons*. Hence sometimes *Jehovah Elohim* is put together; although also the former word signifieth the fulness of Gods being, and giving being to other things. For which reason (say some) he is not named *Jehovah* till the second Chapter in *Genesis*, when all things were compleated; and in another place, God is said, *Not to be known by the Name Jehovah*, *Exod. 6. 3.* because they had not seen the great things promised, accomplished; and *Elohim* denoteth God, as governing and ruling the world; in which sense, the *fool* is said to affirm,



affirm, *There is no God*, no *Elohim*, Psal. 14. 1. Yet having light from other places of Scripture, especially from the New Testament, we ought not to reject this consideration, that therefore *Jehovah* is in the singular number, and *Elohim* in the plural, to signify the *One Nature*, and *Three Persons*. For though from the plural number meerly, we cannot pitch upon the number three more than four, yet from other places joyned to this we may. So then, as God in making of man, spake in the plural number; so we shall find in the Scripture in other places speaking of God, as *Makers*, in the plural number, Isa. 54. 5. Psal. 149. 2. Job 35. 9. for this reason. Though some Divines dare not say, *Tres Jehowae*, *Three Jehovahs*, yet they say, *Three Elohim*, as *Zanchy* nameth a piece of his works. Indeed there are others, who do wholly reject and dislike that expression. The word God is applied sometimes properly, sometimes improperly. Improperly, so it is given to *Angels* and *Magistrates*. The *Apostle* saith, *They are ἀγγελοι Θεοι*, called *Gods* in *Heaven* and *Earth*. Though a learned man observes, That never any *Angel* or *Magistrate* is called a *god* in the singular number; but they are said to be *gods* in the plural number; now the *Apostle* sometimes layeth an argument even upon the number. Improperly also it is given to *Magistrates*; *Moses* is said to be made a *god* to *Pharaoh*; here is the singular number, but the respective limitation is added; because of his dominion God gave him over *Pharaoh*, to bring judgements upon him: Yea, the *Devil* is called the *god* of this world, who is said to blind the minds of disobedient persons. Although some expound that of the true and eternal God, who doth in just judgement harden the hearts of wicked men, *Non impertiendo malitiam, sed denegando gratiam*. But properly and truly it is attributed to the true God only, and he alone is here said with *Christ*, to be the Author of that *Grace* and *Peace* we have. From whence observe,

God alone can give grace and peace to his people.

*That God alone can vouchsafe this grace and peace to his people.*

This is part of Gods *Regalia*, There are many things that the creatures can do as second causes; but here God is the alone efficient. We remain, as it were, in so many tormenting Hels, till God cause his face to shine upon us. Hence (you heard) God is called the *God of peace*; and as it followeth in the next verse, *The God of all consolation*. As therefore God is the fountain of holiness, so that there cannot be the least degree of holiness wrought in thee, without it come from above, thou hast no free-will or power of thy own to procure it: So it is in matter of consolation and peace. There is not the least drop of comfort can fall into thy heart to refresh it, till God pour it into thee.

I shall briefly mention some grounds of this, because it will be more largely handled in the next verse.

Reasons.

First, *God alone can give this grace and peace*, Because he was at first the maker of the heart, he is the Father of all flesh, and of all spirits. Having therefore such an immediate dominion over the heart of man, to put into it what he pleaseth, to raise up what affections he will; no wonder if he alone giveth comfort. *Elihu* speaketh fully to this, Job 35. 10. *None saith, Where is God my maker, that giveth songs in the night? In the night* when the soul may be most possessed with sad and dejected thoughts, even then he can give songs, and that because he is a maker: That as he who maketh an instrument of Art, the Clock or Watch, he can make it strike, when, and how he pleaseth; if there be any hinderance in the motions of it, he can presently rectifie it, because he made it; thus it is with God, he knoweth all the workings, and turnings of thy heart, he made every power and ability



ability of thy soul, and so he alone can fill it with joy or bitterness, as he pleaseth. Though our hearts be not in our power, yet they are in Gods power, and what he bids it think, it thinketh; whereas we have not our own thoughts and motions in our own power. It is God therefore that made the heart, who can make it peaceable and joyfull.

Secondly, *God alone must be the fountain of all grace and peace, Because he alone is the person offended.* When we sin, it is he that is provoked, it's his honour, and his Law that is despised; and therefore seeing not the creatures, but God himself is chiefly offended, till he be reconciled; we cannot have any true and certain peace. That as it is with a Subject, who hath offended the Prince, it lieth in the Prince his power only to be gracious, and to give a pardon; though all men in the Nation should give it him, yet if not ratified and confirmed by the Prince, whom he hath offended, he looketh upon his condition as helpless: Thus the soul troubled for sin, though all the world give him peace, yet that will not satisfie him; his thoughts are daily, *What doth the Lord say?* Besides these, as you see in *David*, though he greatly offended, and injured man, being guilty of blood; yet he cryeth out to God, *Against thee, thee only have I sinned;* and earnestly prayeth, *God would not hide his face from him,* Psal. 51.

*Use of Direction,* To all contrite broken hearts, who like that woman troubled with the bloody flux, have spent all they had upon Physicians that could do no good. Thou hast thus many years been bowed down, a stranger to all joy and peace; look up to God more, know he alone can give thee true joy. For this reason we see *David* and others, still making their addresses to God, *That he would make the bones that were broken to rejoyce,* that he would make the parched wilderness to be like a pleasant spring; for otherwise they are undone and miserable, till he looks upon them. Now then, if God be the only cause of thy peace; take heed how thou provokest him; better offend all the world than God. For the world, though it rage and persecute thee, yet cannot deprive thee of this peace; but God hideth his face in a moment, and then thou must needs be troubled. Therefore do not think to get this grace and peace from thy own works and doings, but imitate *David*, who said, *He would hear what the Lord will speak,* Psal. 85. 8. *for he will speak peace to his people.* Thus we are to be attending more to the voice of God in his Word, by his promises speaking to our comfort, then to our own hearts; thou wilt hear what thy own perplexed heart speaks, or what the Devil speaks, which alwayes suggest matter of terrour and diffidence, and doest not hearken to what God by his Spirit through his Word speaketh to thee. Only take the caution along with thee, the *Psalmist* giveth, *If God have spoken peace, take heed of returning so folly.* Sin may in that particular be well called folly, for thereby we unsettle our souls; we that had the quiet enjoyments of God, and his imbracements of grace, for some sin that pleaseth or tickleth but for a moment, do cast our selves into darkness and misery. So that then sin is especially folly, when we have once experimentally tasted the good grace of God, and then afterwards voluntarily chase it away by our own carelessness. Oh how long mayest thou with tears and cries pray for light and comfort again ere thou canst enjoy it?

In the next place, God is here described relatively, *a Father.* The word *Father* is sometimes taken *absolutely*, as it denoteth God the Creatour and Governour of all things; sometimes *relatively*, as denoting the *first Person* in the *Trinity*. Although the *Socinian* flight this distinction, denying the *Sonne* to be called the *Father*, unless once, *Isa. 9.* which they would wrest to another sense, and that the *holy Ghost* is never called *Father*; yea, that the *Father* is never called *Father* in respect of the first creation of all things; but



but because of his fatherly love and care to the things created; yet these things might be cleared against them, were it in our way so much. Here indeed *God the Father* is named *relatively*, and not so much from the first creation, and making of all things; as from the Covenant of grace, whereby through Christ we are made his sonnes, and what Christ hath by nature, we have by grace. So that the paternal relation here mentioned, is more peculiar and sweet, than that general one to all the creatures, even wicked men, who yet are preserved by him, and like *Ismael* have many gifts, though they have not with *Isaac* the inheritance. Observe,

God is a Father in a more peculiar manner to those that believe.

*That God is a Father in a more peculiar and special manner to those that do truly believe.*

The Poet said, *We were Gods offspring*, who knew not the grace of Adoption, yet the Apostle confirmeth that speech, *because we are all his creatures*; but the good *Angels*, and good men, are the sons of God in a more endeared respect.

What it is for God to be our Father.

We shall not insist long neither upon this, though the Scripture make it the treasury of all our consolation; only we may briefly consider, *What it is to be our Father.* And

First, *It implieth his spiritual begetting us by the Word.* For before conversion the Devil is our Father, we may say, *Our Father which art in Hell*, if we were to pray to him; as our Saviour told the Pharisees, not *Abraham*, but *the Devil was their Father*, and all, because we have his likeness upon us, and his works we do. But when God by his Spirit doth change us, and make us to partake of his Divine Nature, then we are sons, *Sonnes by Adoption*, and *sonnes by Regeneration*. It is not then every one, that God is thus a Father to, he must have the Image of God, and his likeness. Therefore though many call him Father, yet he is a Judge, and an enemy to them, because they are contrary to him in nature and actions.

Secondly, *As God is thus a Father in respect of a metaphorical generation; so also in regard of all his paternal love and care to those that are his.* No bowels of father or mother are comparable to his. Therefore the Prophet *Isaiab* makes his love to transcend the mothers love, and that to her sucking infant, *Isa. 49. 50.* Inasmuch that all our doubts and fears may presently be subdued, if we consider *he is a Father*. Why art thou so disquieted, as if like *Melchizedech* thou wert without father and mother? Thou art afraid of hell and condemnation, but will a Father do thus? Again, thou doubtest about many earthly and sensible comforts, what thou shalt eat or drink, and doth not our Saviour say, *Matth. 6. 8. Your Father knoweth what ye have need of?* Improve then the relation of a Father; think what care, love and bowels God hath put into thy heart, who art a father to thy children; thou never doubtest of thy affections to them, but many times of their affections and dutifulness to thee; And is not this fatherly affection much more in God?

Thirdly, *He is not only our Father, but he sendeth his Spirit into our hearts, to assure us of this, and to be more affected with it, Rom. 8. 15. Gal. 4. 6.* For whereas in nature; there the child by a natural instinct is carried out to his father, and to call upon him; It is not thus in grace, for when God is become our Father, then we need the Spirit of God to assure us of this, to make us believe it; of our selves we should rather conclude, he is our enemy, and our Judge; but this Spirit of God putteth a filial confidence into us. Again, it doth not only assure us, but inableth us against all those doubts and jealousies we have to the contrary, to cry *Father*, that



that denoteth the soul is in a very great agony, many objections and oppositions it hath; but yet we are enabled against our hearts, and against the Devils temptations thus to do.

Lastly, *He is a Father, and therefore doth afflict us, and chastise us for our good.* Infomuch that it is from his fatherly love to afflict us, as well as to give us of his mercies; and if as the Apostle urgeth, *Heb. 12. 9. We revered our fathers after the flesh, when they chastized us, how much rather our Father after the Spirit?* which cannot miscarry, or erre in his afflictions upon us.

To this Doctrine let us adde the Extension of it, *Our Father.* Paul saith not *my Father*, or the father of Abraham, and such eminent Saints, but *our Father.* Observe,

*God is a Father to the meanest and weakest believer, as well as the strongest.*

God is a Father to the weakest believer as well as the strongest.

Hence our Saviour taught all the godly to say, *Our Father.* In this expression is implied:

First, *Appropriation and application.* It is not enough to acknowledge God a Father, but we must bring this relation home to our hearts, *Our Father, my Father, and thy Father.*

Secondly, It implieth, *That God is so the Father of one believer, that he is the Father of all the rest.* Earthly parents have sometimes so many children, that they cannot provide for all (at least) so liberally, but God can do as much for any one child of his, as if he had no more; his riches and inheritance is given to every one, *All his children are heirs,* and have as much as if there had been but one child.

Thirdly, *There is implied the unity and agreement of all believers amongst themselves.* They have *one Father,* why then should there be such divisions amongst them? The Apostle *Ephe. 4. 6.* urgeth this *one God, and Father of all, one Lord, one Spirit, one God and Father.* These are brought as arguments of unity, not meerly because they are *one*, but *one to believers.* All believers have but *one Lord, one Spirit, one God,* and therefore are to manifest this unity.

Use. From both the Doctrines joyned together, of *Direction,* with what Evangelical, quiet, and joyfull spirits we should live upon this divine truth; Gods being *our Father* should be the Gospel harp to drive out every unbelieving and troublesome thought, *1 John 1. 3. Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Sonne Jesus Christ. Our fellowship* it should be no new or strange thing to us.





## SERM, XXVIII.

## Of the Dominion and Lordship of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

2 COR. I. 2.

And from the Lord Jesus Christ.

WE are arrived now to the last particular in this verse, and that is the second Principle or Cause of this *Grace and Peace* prayed for, which is *Jesus Christ*. So that the *Lord Christ* is here conjoynd with *God the Father*, in bestowing of these spiritual mercies.

Christ to be  
prayed to for  
grace and  
peace,

In the words therefore we have the Description of Christ,

1. By his Name, *Jesus*.
2. By his Office, *Christ*.

Both which we have already considered in the former verse. There remaineth therefore the *Relation* by which he is represented to us, and that is *our Lord*. *Paul* here prayeth for *Grace and Peace from Christ our Lord*, as well as *from the Father*, which is a sure and strong argument of the Divine Nature of Christ; for it is God alone that can give these spiritual mercies, if Christ were not truly God, he could not give these divine privileges. And hence also it followeth, That it's our duty to pray to Christ, seeing he is the Author of such mercies. The blasphemous Hereticks of late have differed among themselves, *Socinus* and *Franciscus Davidis* about praying to Christ. The later denying it lawfull to call upon Christ in prayer. The other granting in the New Testament examples of it; as when *Stephen* said, *Lord Jesus receive my Spirit*, &c. So that it is lawfull; but yet he saith, *There is no precept to command it*. But no wonder at this, seeing he holdeth, *That prayer in the general was never a duty commanded in the Old Testament*. We see by this Text, that if *Christ* be the fountain of grace and peace, as *God the Father* is, then are we to pray to one, as well as the other, or to the *Father in the Name of Christ*. The heretical exception against this place is, That because the preposition *απο* is not in the original, therefore he would have the word *Father* relate to *Christ*, as well as to *our*; as if the sense were, *From God our Father, and the Father of Jesus Christ*. Indeed our Saviour doth say, *I go to my Father, and your Father*, John 20. 17. But then he saith, *my Father* in the first place, whereas here in the Text, it's said, *Our Father*; and afterwards in the heretical opinion should follow, *The Father of Christ*; but that Christ in these salutations is meant as a conjoynd cause is very evident, John 2. 2. where the preposition *απο* is expressed from the *Father*, and from the *Lord Christ*, the *Sonne of the Father*.

A second cavil that needeth a vindication, may be, in that *Christ* is said to be *Lord*, as distinguished from *God*: Therefore it may be thought, that *Christ* is not *God*. To this it's answered, That it's true, in the New Testament, though *Christ* be sometimes called *God*, yet the more common title given to him, is *αυτος*, especial-



especially when *God the Father*, and *Christ* are mentioned together, but as when *Christ* is called *Lord*, it doth not exclude *God the Father* from being the *Lord* also: So neither when *God the Father* is called *God*, doth it exclude *Christ* from being *God*. But you may say, *Why doth the Scripture, if Christ be God, and the fountain of grace, as well as God the Father, alwayes put Christ after God?* The answer is, That though absolutely as *God* there be an equality, yet when personally considered, so that divine order is attended unto, whereby the Father is of himself alone, but the Sonne of the Father, especially if we consider *Christ* as Mediatour: so although *God*, yet because in that work he is *God-man*, and in that office inferiour to the Father; hence it is that the Scripture speaks of him as the fountain, and *Christ* as the stream, or rather second fountain; *That of God are all things, and by Christ are all things.* It is good to understand these mysteries, so farre as the Scripture is a guide to us, that we be not involved in those damnable *Socinian* Doctrines which overthrow these fundamentals.

That which I shall observe is from the relation attributed to *Christ, Lord*, viz.

*That Iesus Christ is a Lord.*

*Iesus Christ is a Lord.*

Thus he is often called in the Scripture; yea *Revel. 19. 16.* he is said to have on his thigh this name, *King of kings, and Lord of lords.* So *1 Tim. 6. 15.* *The blessed and only Potentate; the King of kings, and Lord of lords.* It's observed, that these titles were given to the *Persian Monarchs*, because of their transcendent dominion; but here it is applied to *Christ* transcendentally, even to them also, for he is said to be *the only Potentate*, as if none were *Lord* but him. Hence it is noted of *Augustus*, as a providential thing, That the year *Christ* was born in, he refused to be called *Dominus*; and so some *Christian* great men, would not be called *Domini*, but *Domni* diminutively, out of reverence to *Christ*; but the word *κύριος*, and so *Lord* may be attributed to men, as well as *King*, and head, so that still it be acknowledged, he is *Lord of lords*, and that none is *Lord* like him.

But let us briefly open this Doctrine, that thereby our hearts may be more raised up with this greatness of *Christ*; for he is a *Lord* not only for his own great dominion and glory; but for the believers good and benefit; it is matter both of great comfort and encouragement, to know that *Christ* is *Lord*. And

First, We are to consider, *That Christ hath a two-fold Lordship, Kingdom or Dominion*; The one Divines call *Natural* and *Essentiall*; The other *Dispensatory* and *Mediatory*. The former he hath as *God*, and so is *Lord* in the same sense, that the Father is *Lord*. The second he hath as he is *Mediator, God-man*; and therefore it is in some respects distinct from the former, *God the Father* is not *Lord* in that peculiar and proper respect, as *Christ* is. For although that be true, which Divines say, *That Christ's natural or essential Kingdom, doth virtually and eminently contain all that his Mediatory doth*, yet there is some formal respect to be made. Now as *Christ's* former Lordship and Dominion was natural and necessary, so this may in some sense be said to be given him; or as the Scripture saith, *Act. 2. 36.* *He was made by the Father both Lord and Christ*, appointed to be the *Lord*, and the Head of his Church: Not that this doth any wayes evacuate his Divine Nature, as if because he were made *Lord*, that therefore he was not so essentially, for nothing was given *Christ* to perfect him; what he received of his Father in time, did only manifest that he was *God*: for none can be *Lord* and Head of his Church, but he who is truly *God*. If therefore as he is *Mediator*, it be said to be given him to be *Lord*, and to have a Name above all Names, yet this doth not deny but prove his Divine Nature, because none but *God* can have such power, and do such things.

Secondly, *This Official, or Mediatory Kingdom hath its degrees; it is militant*



and triumphant. *Militant*, and so the Lord Christ hath not as yet subdued all his enemies under his feet; it doth not follow, that Christ is not Lord, because every thing is not wholly conquered, because there is sinne and the Devil working still. For as David was King, although still there was a great part to be conquered by him; he was King at Hebron, when he was not made King over Israel, yet he had a right to all, before he was in actual possession: So it is with our Lord Christ, he is made Lord over all, only there is time required, to bring all things in subjection to him. And as for his *Triumphant* and *consummate Kingdom* or *Lordship*, that will be at the Day of Judgement; when having saved all his people, and overcome all their enemies, then he shall take the triumph of all his victories. And here we may take notice how to understand that difficult place, 1 Cor. 15. 24, 25. where Christ is said, *After all enemies are subdued, to deliver up his Kingdom to the Father.* The Socinians urge that, to shew that his Dominion and Kingdom will be but for a season, whereas the Scripture in many other places, maketh his Kingdom to be without end, Luk. 1. 32, 33. To reconcile this therefore you must know, That the Apostle doth there speak of *Christ's Kingdom* as it is *militant*, and in respect of that Dominion and Government, which now Christ useth in his Church, not in respect of the *Lordship* and *Dominion* it self, Christ shall never cease to be the King and Lord of his people; only that manner of Government, which now Christ exerciseth shall cease, all Ordinances and administrations, the Ministry and Sacraments, yea all Magistracy and Civil Power, that God might be *all in all*; for then we shall not mediate by Christ approach unto God, as we do here, but immediately, yet so as all glory and honour will redound to Christ.

Thirdly, *Christ was thus a Lord in the state of his humiliation, even in his very Infancy, as well as after his exaltation and resurrection.* And here again the Socinians blaspheme, denying, *That Christ was thus a Lord till his resurrection.* But although indeed the Scripture doth often attribute this glory and great name to him after his sufferings, and upon his resurrection; yet that is not because he was not so before, but partly because then there was a glorious manifestation of his Dominion. The Sunne did not appear so admirable in his eclipse: Christ in the state of his humiliation did not so fully and palpably discover this his greatness, yet for all that he was endowed with it; and Christ doth acknowledge himself to have a Kingdom to Pilate, even before his sufferings: Yea at his birth, the *Wise men came to worship him as Lord and King*; and when herode in triumph into Jerusalem, that Prophecy was fulfilled, *Behold thy King cometh to thee.* And certainly if then he was a Saviour, and the *Messias*, he must needs be also Lord and King. Yea, in the greatest expressions of his humane weaknesses, as in his birth and death, there was also powerfull demonstrations of his Divine Majesty. Neither is Vorstius his Objection of any value, That because Christ in his Infancy had not that wisdom required to govern, which afterwards he did grow up into, therefore he could not be Lord: For in Christ, while an Infant, were hidden the treasures of all wisdom, though these were not actually to be put forth, but when there was an occasion to do so. There was no defect in Christ to be Head of his Church, while a child, because even then he could put forth whatsoever was required at that time to govern the Church with. And indeed to argue, that he was not Lord or King, because he did not actually put forth himself in that way, is absurd; for kingly or lordly actions did not make him to be a King or Lord, but because he was Lord and King, therefore he did as he pleased put forth such actions. Certainly the Apostle calls him the Lord of glory, even while they crucified him, 1 Cor. 2. 8. And the Socinians themselves acknowledge him upon his ascension to be Lord of glory, when yet the greatest instance of his lordly power is still to be accomplished, which is the judging of all mankind, at that dreadfull Day of Judgement. Christ then was always Lord, both in his state of *humiliation*, and also of his *exaltation*.



Fourthly, *This lordly power which Christ hath, extends to all things in the world, he is Lord over the whole world.* He is the universal Monarch; for God hath given him all the kingdoms of the world, Rev. 11. 15. The kingdoms of this world are there said to become the Lords, and of his Christ: Yea in some sense this great Dominion is given to every Saint, Revel. 2. 26. *To have power over all Nations, even as he hath received of the Father.* Hence it is said, John 5. 22. *That the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgement to the Sonne;* not that the Father hath wholly abdicated himself from the government of the world, as the Socinians say, but because Christ as Mediator is subordinate unto him in this administration. Christ therefore hath an universal power over the whole world; And whereas learned men say, *One man cannot be universal Governour over the whole world, much lesse over the Church, because no man can have those qualifications fit for to discharge that Government:* yet in Christ this doth not hold, because he is God as well as man; but this Dominion of Christ, in respect of his Church, is of another nature than that of the world, for he rules the world with a rod of iron, breaking every thing to pieces that shall prejudice his Church: So that this power over them is wholly coercive, as they do not willingly own or submit to him as a Lord; so he doth by his omnipotent power keep them under, and makes them servants and vassals for his work, and to bring about such glorious ends, which they never intended, or shall have any benefit by, as those that built Noah's Ark, were not preserved in it. But to his Church, there he holdeth out a Scepter of grace. For as they do willingly own him as their King, submitting to his order and laws; so he taketh special care over them, and they may more safely lay themselves down under his protection, than under the greatest Potentate in the world.

More might be said Doctrinally about this Dominion of Christ; but let us consider what comfortable and usefull improvement is to be made of it. And

1. *Is Christ thus a Lord, and that above all Lords?* Then what ground is here for our faith under all discouragements and afflictions? How little doest thou possess thy heart with this Lord of glory? Doest thou doubt about the pardon of sinne, conquering of corruptions, preservation under temptations? Is not all this, because thou doest not remember Christ is Lord of Lords? Will not he bear thee up? Doth he want either knowledge or power? Especially this should encourage us in any work for him. Thou fearest the frowns of man, the oppositions of man; thou doubtest thy cause will sink; and is not all this, because thou lookest upon earthly power as greater than Christs power? Was ever any temporal lord able to do such things, as the Lord Christ? Never than faint or be discouraged under his work.

Use 2. If he be our Lord; then here is ground for duty, as well as for comfort. Joh. 13. 13. *Ye call me Master and Lord, ye do well,* saith Christ; but from that consideration he puts them upon duty. And certainly, if Christ be our Lord, where then is our honour, our obedience to him? May not he impose what duties, injoyne the Church what Laws and order to walk by, he pleaseth? Shall we be our own lords? Our tongues, our hearts are not our own, but our Lords. Take heed of being in the number of those who shall deny the Lord that bought them, 2 Pet. 2. 1. for such as do so, bring upon themselves swift destruction. If he be not thy Lord in grace and favour, he will be thy Lord in wrath, and in thy confusion. They that said Psal. 12. 4. *Who is Lord over us?* found that God would be above them.





## SERM. XXIX.

### *Of the Duty of Thankfulness, Blessing and Praising God for all his Mercies.*

2 COR. I. 3.

*Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.*

**T**He Inscription hath been fully considered; we proceed to the other parts of the Chapter, which are,

1. An *Exordium*.
2. An *Apologetical Narration* against those calumnies that were charged upon him by the false Apostles.

This Text is part of the *Exordium*, or his Introductory beginning to what matter he was delivering to them, and it is by way of *Doxologie* and *Thanksgiving*. For the most part the *Apostle* begins his Epistles with cordial affectionate blessing and praising of God, and that commonly for the gifts and graces which God had bestowed on them he writeth unto; but here he blesteth God chiefly for those consolations and supports, which he himself had from God; and this he doth partly to give all glory and honour to God, partly to animate and encourage all to suffer for Christ, they would not be losers by it; and partly to stop the mouths of his accusers, when they should see that all the afflictions he underwent did turn to his, and the Churches good.

Now in this Thanksgiving passage, we may observe,

1. *The praise it self*, expressed in that word *εὐλογητός*, *Blessed*.
2. *The Object of it*, God, which is,
  1. Illustrated from his relative title to Christ, *The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*.
  2. From his Efficiency, which is two-fold, *The Father of mercies*.. 2. *The God of all comfort*.

So that this Text doth represent God in a most sweet, comfortable and ravishing relation to us. The *Apostle* stands (as it were) here upon Mount *Gerizim*, to bless the people of God, we may here stand and see (as it were) the glory of God passe by. It is not the God of all vengeance and fury; It's not the God terrible in his judgements, that will not in any wise acquit the guilty, but the *Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation*. Let then the troubled and grieved soul, who looketh alwayes upon God as angry, as ready to destroy; bring with the widow its cruises, and fill them with the pleasant oil, that will runne out of this Text. Certainly, if *David* say of Gods word in general, *That it's sweeter than the honey or the honey-comb*, much more is it applicable to this verse.

I shall begin with the *Praise it self*, in those words, *Blessed be God*. *Paul*, you heard, begins most of his Epistles in this manner, and some have thought that all our prayers should begin with thanksgiving, because the heart is hereby raised



raised up sooner to Heaven. The consideration of Gods love being like the fire that will put the soul into sweet distillations. But certainly the method of prayer, whether with confession first, or thanksgiving, is not commanded, but left arbitrary: Only this the soul must remember, to be as diligent and carefull in praising of God, as praying to God.

To open the word, the Scripture speaks of a three-fold Blessing:

1. Of Gods blessing of us.

2. Of our blessing of God. And these differ exceedingly. For God blesteth us efficiently by exhibiting his mercies to us. We bless God, not by adding any good to him, but declaratively only. Gods *benedicere* is *benefacere*, his words are works: but our blessing (as *Aquinas* on the place) is only *recognoscitium*, and *expressivum*, an acknowledgment only, and celebration of that goodness which God hath.

3. There is mans blessing of man; and that is two-fold, either *Charitative*, *Matth. 5. 44.* which is to be done to our very enemies, *Psal. 129. 8.* Thus *Job 31. 20.* speaketh of it by way of comfort, that the poor whom he had refreshed, blessed him. Or *Potestative*, and that is, when Parents and Ministers, such as are in Office and Power, do bless their Inferiours; and this God doth more solemnly ratifie and confirm. Thus the Priests, *Numb. 6. 23, 24.* were in a solemn manner to bless the people; and in this sense the Apostle argueth, *The less is blessed of the better*, *Heb. 7. 7.* And because by blessing the greatness of a thing is set forth; hence it is used sometimes for consecrating, *1 Sam. 9. 13.* *Samuel* is said to bless the Sacrifice. So *1 Cor. 10. 15.* *The Cup of blessing which we bless;* Though we must not understand it of a Popish consecration, although there *εὐλογίας* and *ευχαριστίας*, may seem to be one thing. And because those who did bless others, did commonly come with presents and gifts; hence it is that *εὐλογία*, is used for gifts, and the fruit of liberality, *2 Cor. 9. 5, 6.* The Hebrew word to bless is observed by an *Antiphrase*, to curse; so it's used three or four times in the beginning of *Job*; and *1 King. 21.* *Eustathius* (saith *Aretius*) observeth also that *εὐλογεῖν* is sometimes used for *καταλογεῖν*. The Heathens indeed had a superstition, that they thought an ill omen in words: hence was their *κατασχευή*, expressing terrible things by gracefull names, as *his μακάριοι*, when they cursed, so they called it *Morbis sacer*: But the Scripture doth not attend to that superstition. It is for gravities sake that it useth such an expression. Though a learned man maketh that phrase in *Job*, to be a *Metonymy* of the consequent, because those do sometimes depart from others, to whom they used to wish well, saying, *valere*. Afterwards that word came to be used for a renouncing of all former friendship; so he thinketh the word to bless might signifie, that is, to renounce God, and not own his worship more. But come we to the Observation, which is,

That to bless and praise God for all his mercies, is a duty that the people of God ought to be carefull and diligent in.

This cordial, hearty blessing of God is greatly neglected; some are borne down with the sense of their sins and unworthiness: Some are greatly bowed down under the several afflictions God exerciseth them with: Others are devoured with the worldly cares and discontents of their soul. So that it is a very rare thing to meet with a Christian that walks with such a chearfull, humble and thankfull spirit, that he studieth all the mercies of God to him, and is not willing any fragment should perish. As Flies stick always upon the rugged parts of the glass, and fall from that which is smooth. Thus even Gods own children, if they have any affliction, if they want but one mercy they would have, this doth more trouble and torture them, than the thousand mercies they have from God, do refresh

Of a threefold blessing spoken of in Scripture.

It is a Christians duty to be much in praising God.



What goeth  
to the making  
up a thankfull  
ſpirit.

refresh and revive them. That therefore we may make conſcience of this duty, and be much in, that we may, as the Apoſtle enjoyneth, *Col. 3. 17. In all things, whether in word or deed, be giving thanks to God.*

Let us conſider how much goeth to make a thankfull ſpirit; what will enable us, that we ſhall not alwayes lie among the tombs (as it were) affright our ſelves with our own ſad thoughts, but entertain comfortable and thankfull thoughts, which ſhall conſtantly lodge in our ſouls. And

First, To this duty of bleſſing of God, there is required, as the foundation ſtone, *A deep ſenſe of our own unworthineſs of the leaſt mercy that God beſtoweth upon us.* That is excellent of *Jacob*, *Gen. 32. 10. I am leſſe than all thy mercies.* A man that would ſhoot his arrow high, draweth it backward firſt. The lower we are in our own eyes, the more unworthy in our own thoughts; then a very crum of bread, a very drop of water will be acknowledged a great mercy. *Arminian*, *Popiſh* and *Socinian* Doctrins do all hinder a man in his thankfulneſs, becauſe they do not in a Scripture way, level the mountains of our hearts; they leave ſomething of our own ſtill, that we muſt ſecretly uphold our ſelves with. When God gave the people of *Israel*, *Canaan*, *Deut. 9. 4.* How zealouſly doth *Moses* endeavour to take them off from their own righteouſneſs? They muſt take heed, that they have not the leaſt thought in their hearts about their righteouſneſs. Oh then conſider, what is that *Locuſt* and *Caterpillar*, which devoureth all the ſweet fruit of thy praiſe, and thy joy in God? Is it not want of a true conſideration, how unworthy thou art? Wouldſt thou not call thy ſelf beaſt for murmuring and grieving under any burden God layeth upon thee, if thou haſt a feeling of thy meaneſs and lowlineſs? Thoſe therefore who are conſtantly in a tender feeling and apprehenſion of their own unworthineſs, if God give them the leaſt temporal mercy, but eſpecially if they have a drop of any ſpiritual mercy; that the light of Gods countenance, though but in glimpses ſhine upon them, they cry out, Who am I Lord, and what am I that thou ſhouldeſt viſit ſo unworthy a wretch?

Secondly, *He muſt not only be ſenſible of his unworthineſs, who would affectionately bleſs God at all times, but he muſt alſo conſider what wrath and vengeance he doth deſerve.* Oh this would be like fire in thy boſom! This would quickly caſt out all thoſe troubleſom and diſquiet thoughts: What, Oh my ſoul, art thou diſquieted for want of this or that! What is thy own, but hell and eternal torment? Are any ſoul-mercies, are any body-mercies thy own? Canſt thou claim a right to them? No, the Law curſeth thee, becauſe thou doeſt not continue in all things commanded; ſo that thou mayeſt be curſed in ſoul, in body, at home and abroad. Nothing but temporal, ſpiritual and eternal curſes might compaſs thee about. Now then, if when God might thus curſe, and damn thee, he doth bleſs and pardon thee; What joyfull ſongs ſhould this fill thy heart and mouth with? I have deſerved death, but behold life: my merit is hell and damnation, but the gift of God is grace and peace. As a malefactor, when thou mightſt juſtly expect puniſhment, behold God doth to thee as to *Joſeph*, who under expectation of puniſhment is raiſed up to the higheſt honour in the Kings Court. Oh then, awe thy ſoul, ſaying, Why am I ſo fooliſh and brutiſh? I am not in hell, I am not howling in thoſe eternal flames, which I might not be kept a moment from; and yet how impatient and unquiet is my heart? A full perſwaſion then of what we deſerve, will provoke the ſoul to a cordial bleſſing of God for every mercy.

Thirdly, *There is required the regeneration and renovation of the whole man.* As a wicked man cannot pray to God, ſo neither can he praiſe God. Therefore though natural men may have it often in their mouths; they bleſs their good God, and I praiſe my God; yet to praiſe God requireth a principle of grace within, a ſupernatural roor, as well as to pray to God. Indeed they may externally



ternally sing Psalms, and give praise to God, even as they pray; but all this while, there is nothing at the root, all is dead within, *Psal. 147. 1. Praise is comely for the upright.* It's a comely futable thing for a man of an upright and gracious heart, to bless God; but for a carnal prophane man, it is as unseemly, as a pearl on the swines nose; God is dishonoured, and not pleased: Oh then, that this might awaken every natural man! Thou canst neither pray to God, or praise him: Thou canst neither receive gifts from God aright, or return praise to him aright. So that this must be looked to, as the principal and chief of all. Hath God put his own image into me? Hath God bestowed the life of grace upon me? Then *praise is seemly and comely* for me. Even amongst men the Rule is, *Laudari à laudatis laudabile est.*

Fourthly, *To bless God and praise him, there is required an heavenly raised frame of soul.* For though the principle of Regeneration be the foundation in every one, whereby he is enabled to *blesse God*; yet that is more remote, and habitually only. Hence it is that many of Gods children, though in a state of grace, yet are not in a praising, thankfull temper; they are as so many clods of earth; they are not affected with Gods goodness; their souls are not enlarged, and therefore they mourn, because they are such blocks and lumps of earth. Therefore besides the fundamental principle of Regeneration, there must be proxim and immediate dispositions, which are as the whetting of the tool; like the Cocks stirring of himself, and clapping of his wings before he croweth: and of all dispositions an heavenly heart is the most excellent. Why is it that in Heaven the glorified Saints do spend all eternity in blessing and glorifying of God, and are never weary of it? Is it not because all is made perfectly heavenly within them? If the earth, though a dull and heavy element be at last transmuted into air or fire, it loseth it's former gravity and dulness, and ascends upwards. Thus the soul when freed from the clogs and burdens of the earth, doth with more ease and speed lift up it self to God. The Lark all the while she sits on the ground, scarce sings, but when she riseth from the Earth, and the higher and higher still she flieth, the more sweetly and earnestly doth she sing: Thus it is necessary, if thou wilt really and daily bless and praise God, then raise thy self above the Earth. The nearer to Heaven thy heart comes, the sweeter will thy meditations be, the more joyfull will thy thoughts be. Hence

Fifthly, *Joy and gladnesse of heart is required to blesse God.* The Psalmist often calls to *sing with joy.* And the Apostle, *Is any man merry, let him sing Psalms?* Jam. 5. 13. *ἁῖς*, they say, cometh of *ἡῖα*: That heart which is filled with grief and sorrow, is in no disposition to bless God. As the strings of musical Instruments, while wet and moist, are not prepared to make any melodious sound. To bless God with an heavy heart; to praise God with a troubled disquieted soul, is to contradict with our hearts, what we say with our mouths. Consider then, that though it be thy duty to humble thy self for sinne, to confess and bewail thy iniquities, yet it is also a duty, *To rejoyce in the Lord alwayes*; and till the heart be fited by this joy, thou canst nor bless God with that hearty affection as thou oughtst to do, *Psal. 103. David saith, Blesse the Lord, O my soul, and all within thee praise his holy Name. All within thee*] You see, to praise God is heart-work, as well as lip-work, all within us must move and be affected. Thy heart cannot boil over, as the Psalmist sometimes expresseth it, unless this fire of joy doth inflame it. Oh then know, that a grieving, disquieted soul cannot bless God, it hinders you from that duty which the Apostle presseth, *Col. 3. 16. Admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts.* What an Heaven is such an heart, where there are these spiritual hymns and psalms? But alas how often is thy heart like an howling wilderness, where the cries and dolefull sounds of unbelieving and distrustfull fears do torment thee?



Sixthly, *To blisse God there is required faith, and a resting of the soul upon God, as a reconciled Father.* Alas can the damned in hell bless God? Could *Cain* or *Judas* bless God? By no means, because there is no faith, there is no resting upon God as a Father. Hence you see, the Apostle addeth, *The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father of all mercies.* To cursed and condemned sinners God is not a Father of mercies, but of vengeance and fury, a God of dreadfull judgments, who is said to be *angry with the wicked all the day long.* Hence *David* doth so often in the *Psalms* exercise those appropriating, and applying acts of faith, *My God, and my Tower, my strong help and defence.* It was his faith that made him so thankful. For what is it to hear of Christ, and all spiritual mercies by him, if faith doth not apply them, and make them my own? And then we are stirred up to give God thanks for them, insomuch that faith hath the greatest influence into our thankfulness.

Seventhly, *Faith of adherence is not enough to make the heart so thoroughly and affectionately thankfull as it should be, unlesse also there be (as some call it) faith of evidence, or a good and true perswasion that God is our God.* It's the reflecting acts of the soul, whereby it knoweth, and is assured, that God hath pardoned my sinne, and hath forgiven my iniquities, that are like oil to the lamp of this duty. *David* in some *Psalms* dependeth upon God, and so many times the choicest of Gods servants, they are supported to rest on him, to build their hopes on Christ; but then wanting this assurance, not feeling this love of God shed abroad in their souls; hence they are not fervent and zealous in these duties of blessing and thanksgiving, as they ought to be. Do you not see many of Gods people more forward to duties of humiliation and mourning, more attending to self-debasement and self-abhorrency, then they are to faith, joy and blessing of God; the one they are constantly in; the other, unless provoked and forced (as it were) they seldom accomplish. Now this ought not to be so; we are to *rejoyce as well as tremble*; we are to put both together; we are to bless God for pardon of sinne, as well as confesse sinne; we are to rejoyce in giving of thanks, as well as to humble our souls in acknowledging of our sinfulness. Thou oftentimes saist, Lord pity me, Lord shew mercy to me; but how seldom dost thou say, O Lord, I bless thee, *For thy mercy endureth for ever!* My heart hath been full of sorrow for sinne, and now it is full of joy for the pardon of it. I have prayed that my corruptions may be subdued, and I bless God that prayer is graciously answered. If you wiane a mercy by prayer, and do not wear it by praise, you greatly offend God.





S E R M. XXX.

*Of Praising God, and that for all, but especially  
for Spiritual Mercies.*

2 COR. I. 3.

*Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.*

**F**ROM the method that *Paul* useth here, and in the beginning of most of his other Epistles, we have observed the Duty that lieth upon all the people of God, to be carefull and conscientious in this duty of  *blessing and praising of God*, which is as the legal ointment for the High-priest, compounded of choice and sweet ingredients. It's an  *Angelical work to blesse God*. There remain further particulars that are constituent of this comfortable and profitable duty. As

First, *The heart that is duly fitted to praise God, though it be thankfull for every mercy, even the least mercy, yet it keeps an order in its thanksgiving according to the dignity of its objects*; so that it praiseth God chiefly and principally for  *spiritual mercies*; and then secondarily, for  *temporal mercies*. And this argueth the difficulty of this duty, and that also only the regenerate and spiritual man can in a Scripture-way  *blesse God*, for he only doth preferre heavenly things above earthly. When the  *Psalmist* had spoken of outward mercies to a people,  *Psal. 144. 12, 13, 15.* great mercies in sons and daughters, rich abundance and plenty, he corrects all at last,  *Happy is that people that is in such a case, yea happy is that people, whose God is the Lord.* So that you see all the outward desirable mercies that are, are but in a subordination to Gods favour. When thou art breaking forth after this manner, I bless God for my children, for my health, for my outward contents. Oh but above all, Lord, that I have any spiritual mercy, that thou hast loved my soul, converted me to thy self, saved me from the evil wayes of the world, in this my soul is overwhelmed! So then, as we see it is in matter of  *Petition, Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven.* Thus it is also in  *Thanksgiving*, whatsoever heavenly mercy God hath bestowed on thee, bless God for that in the first place. Thus the Apostle doth praise God in a most divine manner,  *Eph. 1. 3. Blessed be God, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ.* In so much that this may be a good Touchstone of the truth of grace in thee, whether thy soul be most affected and enlarged towards God for soul-mercies, that thou canst truly say; O Lord in that thou hast made me in a saving manner to know thee, in that thou hast revealed thy Son to me, I do more rejoyce in this, and bless thee for it, then if thou hadst given me all the glory of the world! Dost thou see a natural worldly man boast in his riches, in his birth, in his greatness above others, and knoweth nothing at all of Gods favour and spiritual mercy to his soul? This is like a beast that is crowned with Garlands, but yet prepared for the slaughter. Canst thou say, O Lord, I judge all the outward mercies I have to be but husks, and empty shells, in comparison of that  *Manna*, that  *spiritual favour* I am made partaker of. As therefore the spiritual man, when in outward miseries and straights is



not so much grieved under those outward calamities, as because he hath sinned, and God is offended: So neither in outward mercies is the same gracious soul, so much affected with the comforts it enjoyeth, as that the light of Gods countenance doth shine upon him, that he hath an evidence of propriety and interest in Christ, this he would not lose for all the Kingdoms of the world. Let us press this the more, because even the most holy are apt to be affected more with sensible mercies than spiritual; *Nature* teacheth them the one, but *Grace* the other. For as we are apt to desire temporal things above spiritual, so also to be affected with, and bless God for one more than another.

Motives to be more affected with spiritual mercies than temporal.

But take these few Motives to provoke thee to *bless God for spiritual mercies*, which are of two sorts, *External*, as the means of grace, and the Ordinances; or *Internal*, the inward sanctification and justification of our persons. As

1. *That if thou hadst more mercies than Solomon, if thou hadst all thy soul can desire in these outward things, yet if without spiritual mercies thou judgest thy condition is cursed, and to be lamented.* Therefore *Psal. 4.* when the natural persons of the world cried out, *Who will shew us any good?* David, as knowing a better and more solid good, prayeth, *God would lift up the light of his countenance upon him:* And therefore he that hath the least drop of grace, is more bound to bless God, then he that may have all the glory and plenty in the world: Oh then, why art thou not more solicitous, saying, what is this wealth without Gods favor? What is it to say, this house is mine, this estate is mine, but am not able to say, *God is mine?* but if God doth evidence himself to thee, then over-look all thy outward comforts, put the *Ecce*, the *Selah*, upon what is spiritual. This is like the Sunne, which is farre above all the Starres. It is this that makes all outward mercies, mercies; they are no wayes good to thee, but snares and temptations to draw out thy sins. So that thy condemnation in hell will be the hotter, if thou doest not enjoy spiritual mercies with them.

2. Be in the first place affected with spiritual mercies, *Because Christ shewed his love to thee most in these, it was for these he died.* The Scripture doth exceedingly commend to us the love of Christ in his death. Now what are the effects of Christs death? Are they chiefly to make us rich, great or honoured in this world? No, it is for remission of sinne, it's for holiness and power over the Devil. Certainly, if Christ died to purchase these for thee, thou art very unthankfull, if thy heart be not most enlarged to bless God for them.

3. Spiritual mercies are the chiefest object of our praises, *Because these onely can truly satisfie the soul, these onely are a sound cause of rejoycing.* The heart of a man is never satisfied with temporal mercies; but the more he drinketh of them, the more thirsty still he is. When *Solomon* hath made an experience of all, his *Motto* is, *That they are vexation of spirit,* as well as *vanity*; whereas the pardon of sinne, and the Spirit of Christ working in us, these afford uninterrupted causes of joy.

4. *Thy soul-mercies will abide for ever, thou canst not lose thy title and interest in them; but all these earthly comforts are as the flower which presently withereth; thou hast them to day, and they may be removed to morrow.* Be sure then, that thy blessing of God, keepeth that method which the nature of mercies doth require above all things. Let thy soul melt with joy in blessing of God, for what he hath done to thy soul.

Lastly, *Consideration, remembring, and fixed meditation upon the mercies of God, is that which will greatly inflame the soul to give all glory and honour to him.* The heart is not easily and quickly put into a blessing frame; there must be polishing and fashioning of it; and there is no such way for this, as true consideration. When *David* calls upon himself so much to glorifie God, this implieth, that he found his soul dull, heavy and unfit for that duty. The heart will not boil over in meditation, unless it be long upon this fire. *Psal. 45. 1.*

David



David there calls his *inditing*, the *boiling* or *bubbling* of his heart; we are apt to forget Gods mercies, or when we do think of them, they are but transitory and ambulatory, *It is Gods goodnesse*, or *I bless God*, and there is all; whereas when we bless God, our souls should be raised up into divine inflammations; we should be as *Elijah*, who was carried up to Heaven in a Chariot of fire; whereas the soul is at other times *abridged* or *epitomized*, but in short characters, in the praises of God it should be *voluminous*, as you see David in *Psalms* 103, 104, 105, 106, and 107. very large in the enumeration of all Gods benefits, which inimateth, That the soul ought to be extended in all its dimensions, while it sets upon this work. And certainly, meditation is like the birds sitting on the egge, not leaving it, till it hath produced a live young one. This will so often work upon the soul, that at last there will be heavenly and supernatural life; for several aggravations will the meditating heart find in every blessing it doth possess. As

1. *It will admire the power and strength of God in every mercy, especially in soul-mercies*; That God should change such a stubborn heart as thine was; That God should give thee eyes to see, that hast been blind so long; That God should give thee life, who wast dead and putrifying in the grave of sinne. This will make thee wonder at the glorious power of God.

Again, *The Wisdome of God, if that be considered in every mercy, this will also greatly enlarge to thankfulness*. Gods mercies are not only mercies in themselves, but they come in such fit seasons, they are at such times and opportunities, that this maketh them double mercies; and so some have observed this difference between  *blessing* and *praising* of God; *Blessing of God is, because of the goodnesse of the mercy*; *Praising is for the wisdome and curious workmanship of God, as it were in that mercy*. As if a friend, who also was himself the maker of a curious Watch, should bestow it upon you as a gift, you would not only thank him for his love, but praise his skill and art likewise. Thus we are not only to consider the mercies God giveth us, but the wisdome that God demonstrateth at that very time, making every mercy to be with an aggravation.

Again, *Meditation will inflame, by apprehending of Gods freeness in every mercy, and our unworthinesse*. We could do nothing, that may provoke God; especially this we are to aggravate in our spiritual mercies, as *Paul* doth often, excluding our works, and giving all to the grace of God, who worketh according to his own purpose and will. Oh what coals of fire will this be in thy bosome! To think, why doth God do this to me? What moveth him? Is God necessitated to it? Can he not do otherwise? Would he be unjust, if he did it not? And this further will be aggravated, when we consider the mercy comparatively with others that want such; if for spiritual mercies, we compare them with the *damned Angels*, that are utterly cut off from the least crum of any spiritual mercy, though so noble and excellent creatures, may not this astonish thee? And if thou sayest, These are not of the same nature with thee; How many are there of the same flesh and blood, in the same vicinity where thou livest, of the same calling and profession, yea of the same parentage, and yet they are forsaken by God, and left to their natural deserts, whereas he hath pitched his favour upon thee, to *justifie*, *sanctifie*, and at last to *glorifie* thee? Certainly, thou art a stock and a stone, if such discriminating mercy as this doth not affectionately possess thee.

In the last place, *The universality of the mercies thou enjoyest, will much brighten in the consideration of them*. All that thou seest, thou hearest, thou eatest, thou feelest, yea thou thinkest and apprehendest, is a mercy. There is nothing within thee, without thee, or about thee, but it is a mercy. To hear is a mercy, to see is a mercy, to think without madness and distraction, is a mercy. Every thing that is not hell, is a mercy to thee. All the creatures, as *Psal.* 8.

the



the *Sunne*, the *Starres*, the *beasts of the field* are wholly mercies; if then a man set himself to meditation after this manner will he not find the goodness of God, like *Ezekiels waters*, *To ascend higher and higher, till they come over his head.*

But to finish at last this Subject, take notice of the encouragements to this duty of a thankful, blessing and praising soul, that so if thy heart at last be thoroughly raised up to this duty, thou mayest praise God, for this truth that provoketh thee to praise him. And

Motives to  
bless God for  
all his mercies

First, *The more thou blessest God, the more wilt thou have cause to blesse him.* For to the thankfull heart, God multiplieth his mercies, as many times, because thou doest not take notice of his goodness to thee, or lookest upon his mercies as a debt to thee, or thou takest the mercies God hath given thee; and usest them as weapons against him, therefore he taketh away thy mercies from thee, to make thee prize them the more; whereas to the soul that taketh every mercy, as the hen, every drop of water, and immediately looks up to Heaven, that will take up every fragment, that nothing be lost: As thou blessest God declaratively, God will bless thee really: Christ will bless thee, as he did those few loaves by multiplying of them.

Secondly, *Consider this is all thou canst do to God, for all his several mercies.* What doth God require of thee, after all that he hath done for thy soul and body? Is it any thing else, but to magnifie his name, to give him the glory of it? And this doth not at all adde unto the greatness of God, he is not made the more perfect and blessed in himself by all the glory thou givest to him. So that indeed it is the greatest glory that thou art capable of, that God will accept of blessing from thee, that he will own praises out of thy mouth, that he doth not rebuke thee, as Christ did the *Devils*, when they confessed, *He was the Son of the living God.*

Thirdly, *This blessing and praising of God, will keep thee in a joyfull, active, and fruitfull way.* Those that sing at their work, dispatch it with greater facility: And thus it is, the soul filled with cordial thankfulness to God, doth more for God then many others, who are clogged with dejecting and discouraging thoughts: See whether the cause of all thy heaviness, yea the prevailing of lusts and passions upon thee be not want of chearfull blessing of God, *The joy of the Lord is our strength.*

Lastly, *Consider the example of David*, how unwearied he is in this work, never thinking that his soul doth enough herein; and therefore because he cannot discharge this duty to his desire, he calls upon all the creatures of the world almost to help him therein, yea the very *Ice and Snow*, and such inanimate creatures; how much more *Angels and men*, must joyn with him to praise God. In *Austins* time, some were named *Deo gratias*, certainly we should so abound in this duty, that it may be truly said unto God, as *Psalm 22.* *Thou inhabitest the praises of Israel.*





# SERM. XXXI.

*How Christ is the Sonne of God : And how the consideration thereof is the foundation of all a Christians comfort.*

2 COR. I. 3.

*Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**T**He Duty of Blessing, with the Object of it being dispatched, let us now come to that Amplification and Illustration, which the Apostle useth in describing of it. And

The first is, *From a personal and relative respect, The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; Even the Father* ] *ὁ πατήρ*. That particle is by way of interpretation and explication. What he meaneth by *God*, viz. That he doth not take the word, as it is often, absolutely for the essence of the Divine Nature, as common to the three Persons; but relatively, and in the distinct personality of the first Person, and therefore said to be, *The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*. For the particle *ὁ*, as *Stephanus* observeth, may be rendred by *Et, sed, tunc, etiam*, &c. as the subject matter requireth. The Apostle doth in other places delight to use this expression, *Rom. i. 6. 2 Cor. i. 3. Ephes. 3. 14*. In which places the Apostle seemeth with much affection and cordial enlargement to make mention of this relative Title in *God the Father*; for this is the treasure of our comfort; herein are all our mercies contained, that we and Christ have the same *Father*, he by *Nature*, and we by *Grace*. So that we are not to consider of Gods paternal relation to Christ, as a speculative doctrinal truth, but as practical, and the ground of all consolation to us. Hence *John 20. 17*. Christ by way of comfort tells them, *He ascends to his Father, and their Father*. And indeed without Christ we cannot behold him as a *Father*, but as a severe and dreadfull Judge. Only when we say, this Doctrine of the *Fathers* relation to Christ a Sonne, is so full of comfort, you must not understand it absolutely and nakedly, as the second Person in the Trinity, but as assuming the humane Nature into a Personal Subsistency; Therefore he saith, *The Father of Jesus Christ*, which is the description of his Person in both his Natures. So that we must not look upon the Sonne as the second Person alone in the Trinity, but as assuming our Nature; for otherwise the truth would be no wayes comfortable to us, if the Sonne of God had not also been made man. The Observation shall be the words in the Text, viz.

*That God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Which truth shall be first explicated, and confirmed *Doctrinally*, and then illustrated *Practically*. As for the *Doctrinal* part, the *Socinians* they have raised up much dust, and have obscured the point, with their subtil heretical depravations.



tions. For whereas the Church of God formerly did believe *Christ to be the Son of the Father by eternal generation*: They deny this reason, and assert some new ones of their own invention. Yea, and the *Remonstrants* also, though they assert *Christs Sonship from the Father by eternal generation*, yet they affirm also a second way of communication of this Sonship, and that is, *By a gracious vouchsafing of supream power and glory to him*. So that they must acknowledge two filiations in Christ, the one *Eternal*, by that secret and ineffable generation; the other *Temporal*, or *in time*, viz. *A gracious communication of supream power and glory to him*. But this is false, as is to be shewed. But to explain this, Consider,

Propositions  
explaining,  
how Christ is  
the Son of  
God.

First, In the Scripture we read of four ways, whereby a person may be entituled to be the *Son of God*, and to have *God his Father*. (For as for that more common and general notion, whereby God is said to be a *Father* in respect of *Creation*, and so to all men, *Isa. 54. 8*. And the Apostle sanctifieth that expression of the Poet, *For we are his offspring*, we do not here meddle with.) And

1. *There is a Sonne of God by Creation after the Im. ge of God*. Thus *Adam*, *Luk. 3. ult.* is called, *The Sonne of God*, and the *Angels* also, *Job 1. 6*. These are the *Sonnes of God*, and have him for a *Father*, because they were at first created after his Image in holiness.

2. *God is a Father by gracious Adoption*. Thus all believers have received *The Spirit of Adoption*, being thereby enabled to call God, *Abba Father*.

3. *A Person is said to be the Sonne of God, by communication of some power and office*. Thus our Saviour argued from the lesse to the greater, That if they were gods, to whom the word of God came, viz. who were appointed by God to be *Magistrates*, how much more was he God?

Lastly, *There is the Son of God by eternal generation, and thus Christ is onely*. Hence he is called, *His only Sonne*.

Secondly, Take notice, *That Christ is called the Sonne of God, only from one respect, and that is because of eternal generation from the Father*. It is not my purpose to enter into a Dispute about this secret and unspeakable mystery. This is enough for us to know, That Christ is never called the *Sonne of God*, or *God* said to be *his Father*, but because of that eternal generation, as the Apostle proveth, *Heb. 1.* from *Psal. 27*. *Thou art my Sonne, This day have I begotten thee*, which is so attributed to Christ, that thereby he hath a supereminency to all the *Angels*, who yet are called the *Sonnes of God*, upon a gracious foundation. Hence

1. Christ is not called, *The Sonne of God, because he is predestinated to be the Mediator of his people*, *1 Pet. 1. 20*. For he is not therefore the *Son of God*, because fore-ordained to be *Head of his Church*; but this latter doth presuppose, and is grounded upon the former, because he was the second Person in *Trinity*, and *Son of the Father*, therefore was he ordained thus to be a *Mediator* for his people.

2. Christ is not called the *Sonne of God, because of his Incarnation, or that wonderfull manner of the production of his Humane Nature in the womb*. Indeed some orthodox *Divines*, and so *Maldonate the Papist* do grant, That Christ was called the *Sonne of God*, because of that extraordinary conception, *Luk. 1. 32, 35*. for the *Evangelist* seemeth to favour such an interpretation, because when the *Angel* had said, *The holy Ghost should overshadow the Virgin Mary*, he presently addeth, *Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Sonne of God*. Now though these men hold Christ was called thus, the *Sonne of God*, because of that extraordinary and peculiar way of the production of his Humane Nature, yet they acknowledge his *Sonship by eternal generation* also. But it is well observed by other learned men, That it is an impudent concession to the adversaries of Christs Divine Nature, to grant Christ is ever called



called the *Sonne of God*, but because of *eternal generation*. And therefore that expression, *Therefore also, &c.*] is not an argument from the Cause, but the Sign: That extraordinary conception was not a Cause, but a true and sure Sign, that he was the *Sonne of God*, and therefore it's said, *He shall be called*, not be the *Sonne of God*, which relateth to the manifestation and notification of it. And no doubt the *Angel* doth allude the ninth of *Isaiah*, where a *Virgins* bringing forth a *Sonne*, is made a Sign of his being *Emmanuel, God with us*. For if this extraordinary conception had been a cause of this filiation, he would rather he called, *The Sonne of the holy Ghost*, then of *God the Father*, because immediately conceived by him. Neither is that of *Maldonate* true, excepting against this interpretation, *That a pure man might have been so conceived by the holy Ghost, and it would not follow that he was God properly*. For besides that, it is a bold assertion to say so, we must take this extraordinary conception in its circumstances, as it was so promised by the Prophet, and thus it could not agree to any but to God.

3. Neither is Christ called the Son of God, because of his sanctification and mission into the world, as *John 10.35*. Nor

4. Because of his Resurrection from the dead. His education from the earth, as it were a womb to life, being like a new birth. Nor

5. Because of his being placed at the right hand of God, *Heb. 1.4*. For although in those Texts, Christ is proved to be the *Sonne of God* by his *Sanctification* and *Mission* into the world, by his *Resurrection*, and by his *Exaltation*, yet not so as it these did make him to be a *Sonne*. So that he was not a *Sonne* before, but by way of declaration and manifestation. When these things were done, there was a plain discovery that he was the true and proper *Sonne of God*, he was the *Sonne of God from all eternity*; but none could so rise, and be exalted, but he who was so. And therefore the *Socinians*, who make Christ the *Sonne of God by degrees*, by his *Incarnation*, and first, and afterwards more perfectly a *Son* in his *Exaltation*, do most palpably wrest the Scripture.

The Summe therefore of this Discourse is, That as Christ was called the *Sonne of man*, only because born of a woman; so the *Sonne of God* only, because by *eternal generation* he was of the *Father*. Therefore the Apostle asketh this Question, *To which of the Angels* (then much less men) *said he, Thou art my Sonne, &c?* which must be in a peculiar transcendent sense; for in a common general one, *Angels* are called the *Sons of God*. And indeed to be a *Sonne by eternal generation*, and then afterwards by *gracious communication* doth imply a contradiction. For amongst men, he that is truly such a mans sonne by natural generation, can never for any adventitious reason, be properly called his sonne afterwards. If then God be the Father of Christ by generation, then he is not by any other supposed wayes of gracious communication. And that Christ is a *Sonne* in a transcendent way to *Angels* and *men*, appeareth fully by the expression of the Apostle, *Heb. 5. 8. Although he was a Son, καὶ ὡς υἱός, yet learned obedience by those things in which he suffered*. From whence we say, Christ was a *Sonne*, not according to his Humane Nature, for so he was to shew obedience, *Mal. 1.6*. but in that sense wherein he could not obey, viz, in his Divine Nature: Therefore it's a discreet *Axiom* or *Proposition*, *Although he was a Sonne*.

This being laid as a foundation, let us come to consider this as a ground of our comfort. For you may say, Why is God to be so blessed by us? Because he is the Father of *Jesus Christ*. For what doth that appertain to us? Indeed to wicked and ungodly men, who perish in their sins, this makes no more for their comfort; then for apostate Angels, whose nature Christ took not upon him: But as for the godly, the true believer, this is the foundation of all their comfort. For

How Christs being the Son of God is the foundation of a Christians comfort.



First, *In that he is the Father of Christ, by this means he cometh to be the Father in him.* For seeing Christ is ours, then he who is the Father of Christ must be our Father also, as will appear in the second place. But the first consideration of comfort is, That Gods paternal relation to us, is grounded upon the Fathers relation to Christ; Christ merited at Gods hands, that he should be a reconciled Father with us; for without Christ, God is not the Father of mercies, but a dreadfull and terrible Judge, *He is a consuming fire*, and we cannot with any confidence draw nigh to him, but through Christ; God assumeth a new relation to us, of a Judge he becometh a Father. So that we see, this is the fountain of all our comfort: Therefore is God a Father to us, because he is to Christ; and this is the reason, why the Apostle mentioneth (as you heard) this Title so often with *Doxologie*, because without Christ, God is not a Father; We cannot expect a drop of mercy, or the least glimpse of favour from him.

Secondly, *This relation of God the Father to Christ, is of great comfort to us, because of our union with Christ.* When we by faith are made one with Christ, then we have the same Father as he hath; and this is a second ground of our comfort. The Apostle calleth him, *The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, because our Lord, our Jesus, therefore God is our Father, The Devils and wicked men, because they cannot truly say, *Our Christ*, therefore they cannot call God, *Our Father*. It's then our union with Christ, that doth entitle us to God a Father, as well as Christ himself. As it's with the wife, when married to an husband, then the husbands father is her father, and what relations he hath, she is also received into. Thus it is here, when the soul by faith receiveth Christ, he is thereby made *the Sonne of God, and a co-heir with Christ*: They have now the same Father; Christ is become their brother to them: Oh what an unspeakable and glorious priviledge is this, that Christ should not disdain us, or be ashamed of us, but call us brethren, and make us to have the same Father with him! Did faith improve this by lively meditation, what joy and quietness would it produce in our hearts?

Thirdly, This is greatly for our comfort, *Because though there be some distance and inequality, yet we may upon the same general grounds plead the bowels of a Father, and all the effects of fatherly love, as Christ himself may.* Will not the Father deny Christ? neither will he us. Will not the Father reject Christ? neither will he us; he is become a Father to us, as well as to him. Indeed there is a great disproportion between Christ and us in this paternal relation; he is by Nature, we by Grace; he is the only begotten Sonne, we adopted sons; he is perfectly holy, and the meritorious cause of this relation for us. Therefore the Socinian doctrine is to be abhorred, who makes Christs Sonship, and that of believers, to differ only in degrees, not in kind. Yet in the general, because by him, God is made a Father; we may improve it, in what we have his promise for, as Christ himself did. Hence 2 Sam. 7. 14. what is spoken of Solomon, as a type of Christ, and in the general is true of all believers, the Apostle Heb. 1. applieth to Christ, as in such particulars:

1. *The fatherly love and bowels which Christ found from God in all his exercises and agonies, the like may we expect to find.* Did Christ say, when his Disciples left him, *That he should not be alone, because the Father was alwayes with him?* The same may every true believer affirm, when he may be left alone; if in persecutions, thy friends, thy acquaintances forsake thee: If father and mother (as David said) should leave thee, yet this Father is alwayes with thee. So that although thou art not comparable to Christ, either in thy natures, persons or graces, yet remember the same fatherly love is common to both. Hence Job. 17. 23. *That they may know that the love wherewith thou lovest me, is in them. In them* by way of sense and experience, by way of knowledge and certainty.



2. *As God is a Father to Christ thus in love, so also he was in hearing of his prayers, which he put up as man, or as Mediator. Father (saith Christ) I know thou hearest me alwayes, John 10.* And therefore in that wonderfull prayer of his, that his soul poured out before his death, his compellation unto God is, *Father*: And thus also God being a *Father* to us, he will hear all our requests that are according to his will. It is true, God the Father heareth his only begotten Sonne Christ, because of the full and absolute Image of himself in him. There is no sinne, no blemish, nothing blame-worthy in Christ; but in us there are many imperfections: There is iust cause to reject our prayers; but yet because we are in Christ, therefore for Christs sake, and in his Name they are accepted, his incense perfumes their prayers. It is through Christs obedience, that God smells a sweet savour in our holy performances. So that Christ indeed he was heard for his own sake, and in his own Name; but we are in Christs Name. So that you see the redundancy of that paternal relation to Christ in his benefits even to us also. Other properties we might enlarge in, but it is easie to the good heart to suggest them to its self, as the eternity, and the unchangeablenesse of this relation to them, as it was also to Christ. Hence 1 Pet. 1. Christ being from all eternity and unchangeably fore-ordained to be their Head; they were also then comprehended in that gracious Decree of God. Only this difference you must alwayes observe, That God becometh our *Father* otherwise than Christ; for the *Father* begat him from eternity, not by grace, and from his meer free-will, as if he might have not begotten him: No, for he was the Sonne of his Father, by a necessity of immutability (though some adde, we may say his generation was both by nature and free-will, as not being inconsistent with one another:) but as for us, God makes us his sons from his meer good pleasure; he might have refused to adopt any one to his Sonne; he took infinite delight in his only Sonne, which was from all eternity: So that it was the riches of his grace, and the freeness of his bounty to adopt us for his sons, with Christ his natural Son.

*Use of Instruction.* Is God our Father, by being the Father of Christ? Doth our union with Christ, intitle us to that Father, and other unspeakable benefits, which he hath? Then let the Christian soul meditate on this more. *Adam* and *Angels* were the sons of God, but that was by creation; God is thy Father upon a more certain and enduring ground, which is union with Christ. What enemies are you to your own peace and grace, while you look upon your selves as divided from Christ? If the wife make her self a distinct person from her husband, she hath no benefit by the Law, she cannot recover any advantages, but all must be done in her husbands name, and in his title. Thus it should be with thee; pray in Christs name, comfort thy self in Christ, meditate upon God in Christ. The time is coming, when Christ only will be in request, when at the day of Judgement, the voice shall be, *Go ye cursed, because not in Christ; Depart into everlasting fire, because not in Christ.* This then speaketh nothing but terror to the ungodly, who are not branches in him; they cannot have the least comfortable or hopefull thought of God; being not in Christ, they have none of Christs righteousness.





## S E R M. XXXII.

*How God is a mercifull Father, the Father of all mercies to his children.*

2 COR. I. 3.

*Blessed be God, —the Father of mercies;*

**T**He next considerable motive in God, who is thus to be blessed, is from his relative Attribute to us, *The Father of mercies*; if every mercy be a stream issuing from him the fountain; if every favour be a ray, which hath its emanation from that Sun; then no wonder if always, and in all things we are to bless and praise him. Its *Bernards* observation, he doth not say, *Pater ultionum*, &c. *the Father of revenge and of judgments*, which yet he is to all wicked men, but of *mercies*, that is to such as fear him. So that the Apostle doth here represent God, in the most sweet and lovely relation that may be to the truly godly; They must not think fury and vengeance is in him towards them, though sinners, but that through Christ all enmity is taken away, and they may with boldness come to him as to a Father; even as the child doth securely rest in his Fathers bosome.

The words have no difficulty, they are a fountain opened, no stone is to be removed, that the wearied soul may drink thereof. Observe,

God is a mercifull Father to all his children.

*That God is a Father of mercies, or a mercifull Father to those that are his.*

So that our work will be to treat of that Attribute of God, which renders the meditation and thoughts of him comfortable to us. For if he be holy, but *not mercifull*, if infinite but *not mercifull*, if omnipotent but *not mercifull*, he would be a consuming fire to us. It is good therefore for the contrite sinner to hear of this Attribute, *ineffabili desiderio teneor cum audio, bonus Dominus*.

To open this rich treasure, that is able to enrich all, who will come and take of it. Consider,

First, *That God hath such an Attribute of mercy*. The Scripture doth not only represent him *Wise, Just and Almighty*, but *Mercifull* also, *Jam. 5. 11*. God is *πολύπλαγος καὶ οὐκ ἐλεῖς*, *He is very pitifull, and of tender mercy*. The former word is from the bowels that use to move, when we are affected compassionately with any miserable object. So that *Gods mercies* they are *bowel-mercies*, he doth not only do good to us; but to speak after the manner of men, he is compassionately affected unto us, while he doth so. Hence *Luke 1. 78*. they are called *σπλάγχνα ἐλέους*, *The bowels of mercy*: But whether mercy may be attributed to God properly, is disputed, The *Socinians* they deny mercy to be an essential property to God, even as they do *vindicative Justice*. The *Stoicks* they denied mercy to their wise man. *Seneca* grants *clementia* and *benignitas*, but not *miserericordia*, for they defined mercy to be *egritudo animi*, a sickness and grief of the mind, which



which ariseth from anothers misery: And why is it called *miser cordia*, Iarch *Anst*, but because it doth make *miser am cor*. Therefore if we stick to these definitions of mercy, as it is in man, who hath *compassion*, because he hath *passion*, we are not to attribute it to God, but seclude all humane imperfections, and look upon it as an Attribute in God, whereby he doth will to help and relieve such as are in misery, so it is dominantly in him; and as there is none good but God, so we may say, there is none mercifull but God. The mercy then of God is infinite, as his own nature, and doth farre transcend all our sins and miseries, as the Heavens do a mole-hill, only there is not perturbation in the holy Nature of God, which we find in our compassions. *Anselme* expresseth it well, Thou art mercifull, O God, *Secundum nos, non secundum te, secundum sensum nostrum non tuum, cum tu respicis nos miseros, nos sentimus miserationis effectum, tu non miserie affectum*. God then is mercifull, as well as just, and thousands of places in the Scripture speak of this mercy of God very largely.

2. It is good to know, that the mercy of God is taken in Scripture sometimes *Actively*, for that essential Attribute in him, as *Exod. 34. 6, 7.* where the Lord himself proclaimed his own Name, *Mercifull, Gracious, Long-suffering, &c.* Though *Divines* do give notional differences between his *Goodness, Mercy, Grace*, and *Long-suffering*, yet I shall not attend to that. Or *Passively*, for the effects of his mercy, as here in the Text, *The Father of mercies*; so when God doth threaten to take away his mercies, that is, the effects of his mercy, not the attribute of mercy. This you must diligently attend to, because the effects of Gods mercy are more and less, but the attribute in God cannot be so, God is not more or less mercifull; neither doth Mercy as an attribute oppose Justice, as an attribute, but the effects of Gods Mercy may be, and are contrary to the effects of his Justice.

3. We must distinguish between Gods *general mercy*, and his *special*; His *general mercy* is extended to all the creatures, *The whole world is full of his mercies, Psal. 33. 5.* So his *mercy* is said to be *over all his works*. Would the world subsist for a moment, when the Inhabitants thereof are so full of rebellion against God, were it not for his mercy? All that we see, we hear, we taste, we feel, is nothing but mercy. His *special mercy* is to *rational creatures, men and Angels*; and that again is two-fold, *More special*, and *most special*. *More special*, is the vouchsafing of the Gospel, and means of grace, both to the wicked and the good. This Kingdom of Heaven is set open for both. But then there is the *most special mercy*, and that is vouchsafed only to the elect, by which means they are converted, justified, and shall be glorified; and of this it is the Apostle speaks, *Rom. 9. 15. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.*

Thus much may suffice for the Doctrinal information about this truth: Let us in the next place take notice, what is comprehended in this expression, *Father of mercies*. For this is a box of ointment to be opened and bestowed upon poor souls; and while this glory of God doth pass by, we can see but the back parts of it.

What is implied in Gods being called the Father of mercies.

First, When he is said to be *the Father of mercies*, this implieth, *That he only giveth mercies, and receiveth none*. So that as the father giveth being to the child, but receiveth nothing of the child: Thus God he is *the Father of mercies*, because he is absolutely sufficient in himself; he needeth nothing from any, because then there would be a superiour to God. And this consideration may greatly aggravate the glorious Nature of God in being mercifull, in that he himself is like the Sun giving light, but receiving none at all. We cannot say of *Angels*, they are *the Fathers of mercies*, because though they be *ministring spirits* to serve us. An Angel was sent to comfort Christ, yet they need mercy as well as we. The river needs the spring, but the spring is the last, and needeth not the river; and so Angels and men they need mercy every way, but God he needeth none, only he



is the giver of all, *It being more blessed to give than to receive*, even in this sense.

Secondly, When he is called *the Father of mercies*, it implieth, *The voluntariness and readiness in God to it*. Psal. 103. *Like as a father pitieth his children, &c.* We do not intreat or hire a father to pity a miserable child, his own bowels persuade him to it. Now this is much more in God. For as the *Psalmist* argueth, *He that made the eye, shall not he see?* So he that giveth bowels and pity to parents, shall not he much rather be mercifull? So that as it is for holiness; if all the holiness of men and Angels were put together, it would be but a drop to what is in God: So if all the mercy, and all the compassions of all the fathers and mothers in the world were joyned together, it would be nothing to God. Oh what dishonour doth thy unbelieving fearful heart do to this mercifull Father! Thou thinkest he hath but the mercy of a man; thou judgest of his bowels according to thy own; no Gods mercie is as much above thy sinnes and miseries, as his Essence is above thy being. *Onomen (misericordia) sub quo nemini desperandum*: But of that more presently. Only when he is called a *Father of mercies*, that denoteth the readiness in God, and willingness in him; and this is remarkable in Gods mercies, over what is in mans; our mercy is many times, because the object miserable, is of our own flesh, and nature with us. It moveth the heart to see one of the same nature with us to be thus miserable, but God he is infinitely above man, he hath no communion in nature with us, and yet he is merciful. Again, *Mercy* amongst men is often, because we have been under such miseries our selves. They that have the pain of the stone, commiserate those that are in the like manner troubled, because they know what it is. Thus many eminent Ministers of the Gospel, are exercised with soul-temptations and desertions, that they may know how to mourn with bleeding bowels over those that are so tempted. Thus the mercy of Christ as Mediator, differs from the mercy of God, as absolutely considered. For he was tempted like us in all things, sinne only excepted, Heb. 4. 15. and the reason of this the Apostle giveth, *That he might be touched with a feeling of our infirmities*. Christ knoweth what the meaning is of every groan, and every sigh that comes from a child in darkness, crying out, *Why hath my God forsaken me?* Thus Christ as Mediator is mercifull in another way, then God is; yet this advanceth still the mercy of God, that whereas his blessed and perfect Nature cannot know experimentally what it is to be miserable, what it is to need mercy, yet for all that his breasts are full. and no woman is in greater pain to be eased of her burden, then God to bestow his mercies.

Thirdly, *In that he is a Father of mercies, a Father*, there is implied, *That he doth lay our misery to heart*. For although he cannot be passionately affected, as man, nor is sensible of our infirmities, as Christ was, yet this doth not hinder, but that our misery is taken notice of, as really so, as to be succoured by him, as if it were in the most compassionate Father that is. That expression of God concerning the *Israelites* miseries under bondage is remarkable, *Exod. 2. 24, 25.* *He heard their groaning, he remembered his Covenant, he looked upon his children, he had respect or knew them*. See here ears, eyes, memory and mind, all are affected with their trouble. So *Isa. 63. 9* it is said, *In all their afflictions, he was afflicted*. As then anger against wicked men, though in God it be not the ebullition of blood about the heart, or accompanied with a pale countenance, yet it is more really, and dreadfull in God than in man. Therefore better have all the men of the world angry with thee than God. So it is in his mercy, in him mercy, though it have not humane concomitants, yet it's more real, operative and efficacious, than all the mercifull fathers in the world is; and thou hadst better have God shew mercy to thee, than all the men of the world. For

In the fourth place, when he is said to be *the Father of mercies*, there is implied, *The real and lively working of it*. The father though he pity his child, yet cannot give him the mercy of health, much less the mercy of grace. Ministers, though



though they be *spiritual Fathers*, they can only pray for *mercy*, preach of *mercy*, but to give you pardon of sinne, to give you comfort of conscience, and assurance that they cannot do; but God is the *Father of these mercies*, he can give joy to the soul, and neither Devil or sinne can discomfort. As the whole creation came out of the womb of nothing at first; when God said, *Let there be light*, immediately there was light; and as God is called, *The Father of rain*, Job 38.28. because he can open the bottles of Heaven, and refresh the parched earth when he pleaseth; so also he is the *Father of mercies*, because he can turn thy darkness into light, thy hell into Heaven; yea he doth it, that so what many Sermons, many Ordinances could not do, that God suddenly and insuperably doth, he comforts irresistibly, as well as converts irresistibly. But of this more in the next property, viz. *A God of all consolation*.

Fifthly, *In that he is the Father of mercies*, there is implied, *That it's onely from himself that he pitieth us, that he hath something within him to provoke to compassion, when we have enough to provoke him*. And this is represented in that precious Parable of the *Prodigal sonne* returning to his Father; Though there was cause enough from the sonne, to alienate the Father to upbraid him with his prodigality and rebellion, saying, *Whence come you? Where are all the goods I gave you?* Yet for all that, *The Father runneth to meet him, kisseth and imbraceth him*, who might have chastized him, receiving him with as much readiness, as if he had never been such a prodigal sonne; but what moved him all this while? The affection of a Father. It's not then for the godly soul to be poring and puzzling it self alwayes; what is there in me, that may make God shew mercy to me? What have I? What find I in me, that may prevail with God? Oh foolish and unwise Christian! Think rather what is in God to love thee, to pity thee. *I will go to my Father*, saith the *Prodigal*; Though I have lost the obedience of a son, yet he hath not the bowels of a *Father*; the bowels of a *Father* are ready to begget him again. Think what a fountain his goodness is, to issue forth rivers of mercies. So that it is with thee, as some parched dry wilderness, it hath no springs, no streams to refresh it self with, till clouds from above fall upon it. Thus thy heart is scorched, and even burning like hell, till God give thee not a drop of water, but Christs blood to cool thy afflicted soul. Thus you see, what is in this a *Father of mercies*, a *Father*.

In the second place, what briefly is in the object, a *Father of mercies*, in the plural number, and that implieth,

1. *That there is no mercy, but it comes from God. Every good and perfect gift is from him*, Jam. 1. For if to be any creature were the original of mercy, though it be but the least; as to that particular, it would be the *Father of mercy*; if the Sunne of it self were the highest cause of giving light to thee, if it were not God that did cause this Sunne to shine on thee, that Sunne would be the father of the mercy of light. Although therefore God hath appointed natural causes, moral causes, yea and supernatural means of mercy and comfort to thee, yet take heed of calling these *Father*. Thy food would not be a *mercy* to thee, thy house a *mercy*; no thy senses, thy understanding would not be a *mercy* to thee, were it not for this *Father of mercies*. So that wheresoever, and whensoever thou meetest with any mercy, look higher than the creature, see an hand from Heaven giving it thee. As *Gerson* a devout Papist speaketh of his Parents, how that they to teach him, while a child, *That every mercy was from God*; had a devise, that from the roof of the chamber should be conveyed to him every apple or nut, or such childish refreshments, he desired; but *Christ* himself, *Matth. 5.* when he pressed against carefull, distrustfull thoughts, he saith, *Your heavenly Father knoweth what you want*. So that it is not thy own natural father, that is a mercy to thee, but thy Father in Heaven: As that good man in *Ecclesiastical History*, when they brought him news his father was dead, *Desine blasphemias loqui, pa-*



*ter eminens immortalis est.* Thus are we to call nothing a *Father of mercy* to us, but God himself. So that what our Saviour saith, *Mat. 23. 9. Call no man father on earth,* in respect of faith and obedience; neither are we in respect of our mercies. Oh but how difficult is it not to have other *fathers of mercies* besides him!



## S E R M. XXXIII.

### *Of the Multitude, Variety, Properties and Objects of Gods Mercies.*

2 COR. 1. 3.

*The Father of mercies.*

**W**E are further to explicate, what is comprehended in this sweet and comfortable Attribute, *The Father of mercies.* We have already declared, what is in the word *Father*, and gave one instance, what is in the word *mercies*.

Of the multitude of Gods mercies.

The second thing comprized in it, is *the multitude of them*; he doth not say, *The Father of mercy*, but of *mercies*; it is not one or two, but *mercies, many mercies, innumerable mercies, that he is Father of.* Even as *David* doth sometimes call God, *The God of his salvations*, in the plural number, because of the frequent and many deliverances God vouchsafed to him. The Lord therefore is not straitned in mercy, no more than in power; but as nothing is impossible to him, so every kind of mercy is easily producible by him. The multitude of Gods mercies, is that which *David* doth often mention, *Psal. 106. 7, 45. Psal. 51. 1.* And indeed were not these mercies many, our sins would be more than they, and exceed them in number. *David* complaineth, *That his iniquities were more than the hairs of his head*; and yet at another time acknowledgeth, that such were the benefits of God towards him, *that he is never able to reckon them up.* We cannot then come and say to God about mercies, as *Esau* did to his father about blessings, *Hast thou but one blessing, O my father? Hast thou but one mercy? Woe would be to us, if God had not multitude of mercies, for we have multitude of sins and miseries.* Oh then, let the broken, humble heart, who groaneth under this, that he hath many sins, they are not one or two, but many, yea the multitudes of them, are like so many locusts and caterpillars in *Egypt*, he cannot look this way, or that way, but sinne doth compasse him about! Let such remember, that there are more mercies for them, then sins against them. If thou hast multitude of sins, God hath multitude of mercies to cover them, so as thou dost not cover them, but confesse and bewail them.

Of the variety of Gods mercies.

Secondly, In this expression of *Father of mercies*, is not only comprehended *the multitude of them, but the diversity also, he is the Father of all kind of mercies, God hath an unexhausted treasure of mercy.* Therefore the Scripture calls God *rich in mercy*, *Ephel. 2. 4.* Though God be rich in wisdom, in power, yet the Scripture calls him only rich in mercy, as if herein he did most excell. Now from this treasury arise all kinds of mercies. Do not say, God may by his mercy help me



me in this particular, and in that respect, he can give me bodily *mercies*, but can he give soul *mercies*? He can give private *mercies*, but can he give publick *mercies*? Yes, we have too low and narrow thoughts of God, if we limit him to any kind of mercy, he can do the greatest as well as the least. Let us instance in some kind of *mercies*. As

1. *There are common mercies, and there are special mercies. Common mercies* are those the whole world is full of; He maketh the Sunne to shine upon the good and the bad. Therefore our Saviour presseth us, *To love our enemies*, because God is thus *mercifull* even to his enemies; Is not the whole earth, every Village, every Town full of the common mercies of God? How come so many to live, to subsist upon his cost and charges? Whence is it that all the people in the world are provided for? Is it not from the *mercy of God*? Lam. 3. 22. *It's the Lords mercies that we are not consumed*; That famine, warre, plague and other judgements, do not sweep away all the inhabitants of the earth; That the whole world doth not fall into ruines; This is from Gods *meer mercy*. That all are not roaring in hell, it's the *mercy of God*. Now this *common mercy* is the more admirable, if ye consider what kind of persons they are to whom he is thus *mercifull*, even to his very enemies, that hate God; and if it lay in their power, would destroy him, that he should not have a being. Oh the mercy of God that is continued to many a prophane beast, and many a malicious Devil; to what is good! Why is it that every liar is not stricken dead with *Ananias*? Why is it that every drunkard quaffing in his pots, doth not see a terrible hand-writing in the wall against him? Why is it that the earth doth not open to swallow thee up, while thy mouth is full of cursing and swearing? Is not all this from the mercy of God? Oh how little doth this mercy of God lead you to repentance, whereas it is vouchsafed to you for that end! Let it not be despised, because it is common. For though God be thus often *mercifull*, yet sometimes his judgements are terrible to prophane men: They are suddenly destroyed, while they are in their drunken fits, and it is Gods *mercy* that what hath befallen others doth not also come upon thee; but after thy impenitent heart, *Thou treasurest up wrath against the day of wrath*; Now is the *day of mercy*, but then will be a *day of wrath*. There are *special mercies*, such as the godly are only partakers of, *To be called, to be justified, to be sanctified, &c.* Oh what heart or tongue can express the happiness of those, who have these mercies! How sacrilegious are those Doctrines, that do not make God wholly and solely the father of these mercies, but they make themselves, and their own free-will, to be joyned-fathers with God in these mercies? But as *Austin* of old urged, *If I cannot make myself a man, which is the lesser, can I make myself an holy man, which is the greater?* If there is not the least temporal mercy that thou canst procure by thy own power, not a morsell of bread, not a drop of water, canst thou by thy own strength obtain the greatest of all? Though it be said, *The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon*; yet it cannot be said, the vocation, the justification by *Paul*, and by *Christ*; but *Christ* alone doth these things in us and for us, though by his grace we are also sanctified and enabled to do that which is holy.

Again, There are *soul-mercies*, and there are *bodily-mercies*; There are *spiritual*, and there are *temporal mercies*, now God is the Author of both. We may sinne by unthankfulness for either of them; if thou takest thy bodily-mercies as due, thy health, thy sleep, thy preservation from daily dangers, in this thou wrongest the goodness of God; for if he take away his hand but for a moment, thou canst not subsist. And as for *soul-mercies*, whether the *natural ones* of it, as thy wit, thy understanding, thy fancy, thy senses, God is the Father of them: Or the *spiritual ones*, there he is much more; if thou hast repentance, faith, assurance, a gracious contented heart in every condition, these are *mercies of mercies*, but God alone is the Father of them.



Furthermore, *There are preventing, or privative mercies, and there are positive mercies.* Now the Rule is, *Plures sunt gratia privativa quam positiva*, more privative favours than positive. Did not God prevent, what innumerable evils might arise every day to destroy thee? When we pray for *daily bread*, in that we comprehend all kind of outward bodily mercies; so that if the Lords hand were not alwayes giving, we could not abide a day. Now seeing that by sinne we are made obnoxious to all the curses in the Law, *To be cursed at home, and cursed abroad.* How manifold are Gods preventing mercies to us? What evil might every day bring forth to thee? What a sad night might every night be to thee, if Gods preventing mercies did not compass thee about?

Lastly, We might instance in *private mercies, and publick mercies.* But what hath already been spoken, may abundantly confirm us, *That God is the Father of mercies.*

Of the Properties of Gods mercies.

In the next place, Let us consider the *Property of Gods mercy.* And

1. *He is infinite in mercy, as well as in other attributes.* So that this fountain can never be drawn dry, he hath mercy enough for thee and me, and for all the humbled sinners in the world: If all the Nations of the world are but as a drop to him, so neither are all the sins of the world, but as a drop to his mercy. No sins are too many, or too great for Gods mercy. And truly this consideration alone, is that which doth revive and establish the drooping soul; for if it were but the mercy of a creature, if it were finite mercy that thou hadst to do with, woe and again woe would be unto thee. The Prophet *Isaiah* speaks fully to this, Chap. 55. 7, 8, 9. where there is an encouragement given to the wicked, *To forsake his evil wayes, because God will have mercy, yea he will abundantly pardon, or multiply to pardon;* and whereas the sinner might think, Surely God will never do so, to such an hainous and wretched sinner as I am; the Prophet tells us, *Gods thoughts are not as our thoughts, but as the Heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways, viz. of mercy to our wayes.* As then the earth is but like a pins head, in respect of the vast dimensions of the Heavens; so are all our sins comparatively to Gods mercy. If then thou hast great thoughts about thy sins, saying, *They are greater than thou canst bear,* yet have as great thoughts of Gods mercy, and know they are not greater than mercy can take away.

2. *As it is infinite mercy, so they are tender mercies, bowels of mercies.* Psal. 40. 11. *David* prayeth, *God would not take away his tender mercies from him.* Hence he is compared both to a Father and a Mother. Oh take heed then of dishonouring God, by hard distrustfull and unbelieving thoughts about him! Think not of him as an austere Judge, who reapeth where he doth not sow. The Devil, and our guilty consciences are apt to represent God otherwise than he is. Indeed while thou art secure and stupid in thy sins, thou thinkest of God as an *Idol-god*, having no eyes to see; or thou presents him only a *mercifull God* to thy self, as if he were not also holy and just; but when once sinne burneth in thy heart like fire; when God makes thee a terrour to thy self, because of thy wickedness, then all is turned; Thou thinkest of the justice and vengeance of God only, as if he had no mercy; but when thy sins are a burden to thee, and thou dost in the sincerity of thy heart forsake them; then think of God only, as the Scripture represents him; then hearken what mercy, comfort and peace he speaks to such a contrite soul as thou art.

3. *They are sure mercies to all the godly.* Isa. 55. 3. They are called, *The sure mercies of David.* For all necessary mercies, either for soul or body, they are bound up in Gods promise; and therefore they may well be called *sure mercies*; even those thou hast not yet, are as *sure mercies*, as if thou wast already possessed of them. Glorification and salvation are the *sure mercies* of God to thee, though for the present thou art in a valley of tears, sighing under thy miseries.

4. *They are free mercies, such as God doth only for his Names sake, when we have*



have nothing but sinne in us, that may justly provoke God to turn his *mercies* into judgments, yet for his own sake he will be mercifull. Though we have lost our grace, yet he hath not that attribute of mercy. Thus Psal. 6. 4. Psal. 31. 16. David still prayeth, *Save me for thy mercies sake*; So that this may greatly encourage thee, when thou thinkest, Oh what a barren and dry wilderness am I! Oh what matter do I find in me, to displease God for ever! In the midst of these thoughts remember Gods mercies are free; They have no other original or rise, but from himself. Think though I have degenerated from my holiness, yet God can never lay aside his mercy.

But you will say, *Is this truth to be indifferently published to all? May we tell every one, that God is the Father of mercies to him? Will not this be to make the heart of the wicked glad, whom yet God would have made sad?*

To answer it therefore first, It cannot be denied, but that God is very mercifull even to wicked men, and that while they continue in their obstinacy. Doth not experience confirm this? And this mercy of God is not only seen in temporal things, he giveth them health, life and wealth, so that they can never plead against God; but also he is mercifull to many ungodly wretches, and that in spiritual mercies, he giveth them the kingdom of grace, he giveth them the Ministry of the Gospel, he alloweth them the day of grace, whenas they might have been alwayes kept up in darkness. Hence it is that the Scripture doth so often complain of the unprofitableness, of the unthankfulness and forgetfulness towards him, even worse than of the brut creatures.

But in the next place, *There are the most special mercies of his complacency and delight, and these are vouchsafed only to true believers.* So that we cannot properly say, *God is a Father of mercies* to any but to the upright in heart. For though wicked men do taste of many mercies from God, yet he is not a reconciled Father to them; They come not from him as a Father in Christ; and therefore though in themselves they may be called mercies, yet if you consider the event of them, how the wicked abuse all mercies, and increase their sins by them, it will be at last confessed they were not mercies, but judgements to them. The mercies then which arise from Gods favour none have but those that are godly; and we may in brief take these Characters of such who are Objects of his mercy.

First, *Such as are of a broken contrite heart for sinne, such who forsake and cast it away in their lives.* To these only God is a Father of mercies: For as for the wicked, it's said, *God is angry with the wicked every day.* To whom doth the justice of God, the curse of the Law belong, but to those that are thus guilty of sin? The doubt then is not, Whether God be mercifull? but whether thou art the fit subject of mercy, whether thou art the man God will honour.

Secondly, *Such only are the Objects of his mercy that have faith in him, that hope in his mercy.* Hence David doth so often profess his trust in Gods mercy. For there is either a pharisaical self-righteousness in us, whereby we are apt to trust in our righteousness, and in the works we do. We see by the Jews of old, and most Christians at this day, that they are so full of themselves, that they never trust alone in Gods mercy, or else if sin be set home upon the conscience, then many prove Cains and Judasses, they flie from the mercies of God in Christ, and damn themselves for fear of damnation; so that presumption makes most, and despair some few, the unfitted objects of Gods mercy; misery alone doth not prepare thee for mercy: The Devils and damned in hell are miserable enough, yet cannot obtain one drop of mercy; but there must be a debasing of thy self, because of sin, and then raising up of thy self to catch hold on mercy.

Who are the  
fit objects of  
Gods mercies.





## SERM, XXXIV.

*How God is the God of comfort, yea of all comfort and consolations to all those that are his.*

2 COR. I. 3.

*And the God of all comfort.*

**T**He next ground, why God is to be blessed, is, because he is a God of all comfort. Now although this might seem to be the same with the former, when he is stiled the Father of mercies. Yet we may make that distinction; which Aquinas upon the place giveth, viz. That he is a Father of mercies, because he doth either prevent, or remove those miseries, that our sins do deserve; but he is the God of all consolation, in that, though our afflictions and tribulations be not taken away, yet while we are in them, he doth give many consolations, and causeth much joy in the heart. God therefore is called the God of comfort, in this respect, that though for just and wise ends, he will not deliver his people from sad exercises, yet he will in those exercises give them such strong cordials, and sweet revivings, that they shall not only have patience to bear them, but even joy in them.

So that in the words we may take notice of what he is said to be, a God; and then the Extent, or Universality of it, a God of comfort, and a God of all comfort. The Greek word *παρηγορίας*, is used sometimes for exhortation, and sometimes for comfort; for exhortation, Act. 13.15. Rom. 12.8. and for comfort in many places. In 1 Cor. 14.3. there is *παρηγορίας* and *παραινέσις*, Exhortation and comfort put together. Some say, therefore is the same word put for exhortation and comfort, because spiritual consolation is hardly received by the afflicted humbled sinner; and therefore he must again and again be pressed and exhorted to entertain it; for the Devil is the prince of darkness, and father of terrors and fears, and so immediately opposite to this glorious Attribute in God, The God of all comfort. The holy Ghost from this word is called *παρηγοριος*, the Comforter. So that although by way of œconomy it is attributed to him in an appropriated manner, yet that doth not exclude the Father. For *opera ad extra sunt indivisa*, but (as was formerly said) this fountain doth not need any stone to be removed from it, and therefore we may immediately drink of it. Observe,

God is a God  
of all comfort  
to all his chil-  
dren.

*That God is a God of all comfort to such as are his.*

The Apostle is not content to call him only the Father of mercies; but as a further aggravation of his goodness, represents him to us, as a God of all consolation. For though he be a Father of mercies, yet because a Father, he doth chasten and correct us; it is necessary therefore that under those corrections, we should be supported by heavenly consolations from him, Rom. 15.5. Paul doth in that place also style him, The God of patience and consolation; the God that giveth us to be patient and lowly under his hand. For who is not furious and fretting



ting against God under chastisements, if God give not a meek and patient spirit? But that is not all, he is also a *God of consolation*, that is more than patience; he giveth songs in the night; he turneth our water into wine; Though tears may be for a night, yet joy cometh in the morning.

But let us consider, how much is comprehended in this expression, *The God of all consolation*, wherein every word hath some emphasis. As

First, In that he is said to be a *God of comfort*, a God, that intimateth these things to us:

What is comprehended in that expression, *God is the God of comfort.*

1. That he hath a *supream power*, and independent *Dominion and Sovereignty* over us, whereby he distributeth comfort, when, where, and to whom he pleaseth. For in being a *God* of it, that supposeth all comfort is at his command; he makes it go where he goeth, and he taketh it away where he pleaseth. Hence we read in Scripture a *cup of consolation*, Jer. 16. 7. and a *cup of salvation*, Psal. 116. 3. and Psal. 23. 5. David speaketh of his *cup running over*, that is, a *cup of gladness and joy*. Now why is it called a *Cup*? *Expositors* say, It's an allusion to the master of a feast amongst the Jews, whose custome was to assign the *Cup* of praise, and thanks to those who were to drink of it. In that then it is called the *Cup of gladness*, that supposeth it to be a *cup in Gods hand*, who is the chief governour of the world, and that he giveth thote to drink, whom he approveth of. Even as the Scripture speaks also of a *Cup of astonishment*, a *cup of anger and fury in his hand*, which he will make nations to drink off whether they will or no, Jer. 25. 28. God then hath a *cup of joy* in his hand, and he giveth his people to drink of it, when he pleaseth; we cannot have joy and comfort when we please. The godly afflicted soul would give a world for comfort in his heart, but he cannot procure a drop to his own soul by his own power.

2. He is a *God of consolation*, and that supposeth him to be alone the efficient cause of it. That if we would have our sad and darkned hearts filled with joy, it is God alone that can do it: So that as he is called, *The God of all grace*, because there is no grace, whether outward or inherent that we are made partakers of; but it cometh alone, and freely from God the fountain: So is he also *the God of all comfort*, because it's he alone that worketh this comfort in us. The least affliction, the least sinne in its guilt, would be enough to overwhelm us, did not God come in with comfort. David under the sense of Gods wrath for his sins, and complaining of his broken bones, Psal. 51. doth earnestly pray to God, *To restore joy to him again*. Alas he was never able to bring joy more into his soul: But as when the Sun is set, all the men in the world cannot make it rise again, it would be perpetual night, if God did not make the Sunne to arise. So the godly heart humbled for sinne, would find continual blackness and horror, would be in a perpetual hell, if God did not create light in that soul. Hence Gal. 5. Joy is made *the fruit of the Spirit*, because it's the *Spirit of God* that can only comfort the heart truly. Indeed there is much carnal and worldly joy, that men may for a while sport themselves with, but this is no true enduring comfort; It is but a vapour, a dream, a blaze, like the tickling upon a scratch, that leaveth more smart afterwards. He is therefore a *God of consolation*, because God only can vouchsafe it.

3. He is the *God of comfort*, because whom he will comfort, shall be comforted. As he makes men drink the *cup of his anger*, whether they will or no, so even those humbled souls, who with frowardness and unbelief set themselves against comfort; they do with Rachel refuse all comfort, yet God doth wonderfully bring comfort into their hearts. How subtil and resolute are sometimes Gods own servants, while in darkness, to argue against, and refuse the comfort, that the Ministers of the Gospel bring to them; They will not let the good Samaritans pour oyl into their wounds. But when God cometh with comfort, then these boisterous winds and waves will presently be silent. Hence David, Psal. 4. acknowledg-

eth;



eth, God had put more comfort in his heart, then they had in the abundance of all earthly joy. God did put it into his heart, even with a kind of holy irresistibility; when he comforts, neither sinne, or the Law, or the Devil can discomfort. Insomuch that it's great matter of praise to God, when the soul hath been at the very borders of hell, and hath been ready to be swallowed up with overmuch grief, that then, even then God hath caused joy to arise in the soul, so that all his doubts, all his darkness, they are dispelled; and as the Church said, *When their captivity was turned as the streams in the South, they were like men in a dream.* Thus are they even astonished to see what a wonderfull alteration God hath made upon them, turning a barren wilderness into a pleasant pool. Thus God comforts, as he teacheth; none teacheth like him; for he doth not only reveal the object to be known, but prepareth and fitteth the subject to understand: whereas man teacheth only by propounding Truths, but cannot give a mind to understand. Thus God also comforteth, as no friend can, no Minister can, because God doth perswade the heart; he can take away the fears and the doubts, and so make all comfort to have an immediate illapse into the soul: whereas even the Ministers of the Gospel, though they bring the glad tidings of peace; *Though they have the tongue of the learned to speak a word in season to the afflicted soul,* yet they can bring this no further than into the ear, they cannot make it at all descend into the heart; insomuch that Ministers comfort in vain, and the Sacraments they seal comfort in vain, till God do alter and change the heart. And thus much is considerable, because it's said, *The God of consolation.*

What is implied in the word consolation.

Secondly, *What is implied in the word Consolation:* And

1. *We are to know, this is one of the sweetest mercies in all Gods store-house, comfort and consolation; and that in this valley of tears, where we meet with so much discomfort, where there are so many grieving and tormenting passages.* This makes the mercy to be of greater moment. For what if a man had the abundance his heart can desire, yet if he have no comfort in any thing, a dead man, yea a dead dog is better than such an one. Insomuch that a mans whole life is almost for nothing but a comfortable life. *Comfort and delight* is so great a matter, that some Philosophers placed utmost happiness therein. Look over the whole world, and you will see, not every man that is most wise, or most great, not every one that liveth in most abundance and most honour, but he that liveth most comfortably, liveth the life most to be desired. Yea many time a Crown of gold is a crown of thorns; and a cottage hath more comfort than a Palace. So that the mercy here spoken of, is the salt that seasons all conditions; without this a man is no better than a Cain, or a Judas; without this every house and field is an hell. When therefore it's said, *The God of comfort,* here is insinuated the most desirable thing that can be. Yea, it's no wonder to hear, that if a man hath wealth and honours, but without comfort, that his life is a torment. For although a man have true grace, and be an eminent servant of God, and therefore will be certainly blessed hereafter, yet because he hath no comfort in his soul, his condition is very terrible and sad: As you see it was with Job, yea with Christ himself, though the only Sonne of God, yet because without comfort, when at the same time he was full of grace and holiness, what grief and agonies did he conflict with. So that your comfort is like oyl (it's called the oyl of gladness) for it will be alwayes uppermost in the soul.

2. *Comfort is such a rare mercy, that unless God give it, it is not to be found in the heart of a man.* For how can comfort and sinne be together? Every man hath by nature forfeited all his comforts. There is not the least drop of comfort, but every man hath outed himself of it; so that man and the Devils are all alike in respect of deserts. As the Devil cannot any where gather up so much as a crum of a comfort, so neither might any man living. The whole world might justly become an hell, and not one drop of comfort to be found in it. Therefore that God



is a God of comfort to a believer, it's an unspeakable mercy, for of himself cannot come any comfort, nothing but briars and thorns, nothing but hellish torments and despair, will naturally arise in our hearts. So that comfort is the more to be prized, because we have lost all, and might justly be as full of horror and fears, as we are of sin. As sin hath abounded, so not grace, but vengeance might abound much more. Hence

In the third place, *Therefore is God a God of consolation, because Christ hath made a full atonement for us by his blood.* Such a glorious expression as this, could not have been true in the world, but for Christ; if no Christ, then no comfort. Hence in the Text it is said, *The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*; and then followeth, *The God of comfort.* So that as we are to pray in the name of Christ, so we are also in his name to offer up praise and thanksgiving. It's then through Christ alone, that he is a God of comfort; and indeed without Christ, he is the God of all wrath and vengeance, of all anger and judgements; his holiness and justice is such, that were it not through him, he would be a consuming fire, and the most holy man would not be able to stand in his sight. So that it cost Christ dear to make a way and passage of comfort for us.

Lastly, *God through Christ being thus the fountain of all consolation*; hence it is that he doth most genuinely and properly of himself, shew mercy and touchsafe comfort. Even as the Bee of it self makes honey, but never stings, except when provoked. Thus if we walk not alwayes comfortably, if we live not in holy joy and gladness of heart, this ariseth from our selves. The vapours that turn into storms and thunder come from our own bowels, otherwise God would alwayes be communicating consolations to us; we shut out the light from us, we turn sweetness into bitterness. Thus the Psalmist saith, *That God doth not afflict willingly.* The works of justice are commonly called *alienum opus*; but Gods works of justice are his proper works, as well as of mercy; only our sins stirre him up, and provoke him to the one, but his meer goodness and mercy inclineth to the other, so that now God would alwayes fill the hearts of his children with rejoicing, did not they obstruct it themselves.

In the third and last place, he is said to be *the God of all consolation.* There is the extent of it, *All consolation*, which implieth,

1. *That there is no consolation but cometh from him; no true and solid comfort, but God bestoweth it.* As for that prophane and wicked mirth, which the Devil stirreth up ungodly men unto, that is not worth the name of joy, it's a madness, for they descend quick as it were to hell from these jollities; all true comfort is from God.

2. There is implied, *That God hath a store-house of all kind of comforts, whatsoever thy necessity and wants are, he can comfort thee.* It is not every comfort that will heal every wound, but God hath a treasury of all; if thy soul need comfort, he can comfort that; if thy body need comfort, he can do that. Ob then, let not these consolations of God seem a small thing to you! Job 15. 11.

How he is a  
God of all  
consolations.





## S E R M. XXXV.

*Some Propositions clearing the Doctrine of Gods  
Mercy, from both Doctrinal and Practical  
Objections.*

2 COR. I. 3.

*The God of all comfort.*

**W**E shall now put both these descriptions of God joyntly together, having already considered them severally. For seeing in the mercy of God is all our hope, Christ hath this Rainbow about his Throne. And although it may affect us to hear, that God is Wise, Omnipotent, of glorious Majesty, yet nothing is so sutable and proper for poor sinners, as to hear of *Gods mercy*. Therefore I shall at this time enlarge further about it, and so conclude. And that which I shall deliver, shall be laid down in so many Propositions, which will be to obviate either Practical or Doctrinal Objections. And

Propositions  
obviating pra-  
ctical and do-  
ctrinal objecti-  
ons about the  
mercy or com-  
forts of God.

First, *The mercy and comforts of God, this glorious Nature of his, whereby he is ready to pity those that are miserable, is so to be managed in the publick preaching thereof, that it be a sovereign Antidote against all despair, and yet a curb against all presumption.* For so it falleth out, that we can hardly open the treasures of Gods mercy, and discover the glory of his grace and goodness to the humbled sinner, but presently the carnal prophane heart is ready to encourage himself thereby. It is therefore the part of a wise Dispenser of this glad tidings, to consider the subjects with whom he hath to do, and accordingly to publish terrour to whom terrour is due, wrath to whom wrath is due. And then on the other side, peace to whom peace belongs, mercy to whom mercy belongs. Though therefore God style himself, *The God of the fatherless, and the widow, that he is pitifull to such as are miserable*: Though very wicked (it may be) and prophane, yet this is with a general mercy onely; his peculiar and special mercies are onely to those that fear him. If then a man go on wilfully in his ungodly wayes, if he will still retain his transgressions, he must not think to find God *mercifull* to him, he will find *David's* prayer fulfilled, *Psal. 59. 5. Be not mercifull to any wicked transgressor.* This bread is for children, not for dogs, yet how difficultly can we keep such off from applying this mercy to themselves? Those are commonly most confident of it, to whom it doth not belong; therefore beastly men are barred off from coming near this Mount; This pearl is kept from Swine. When we meet with broken contrite hearts, here we display the *mercy of God* with all our might; To such we say, *Gods mercies* are infinitely more than *their sinnes*; That although they had the sinnes of all the men in the world, yet they were but as a drop to the Sun-beams



beams of his mercy, which will quickly dry them up: To such we say, God doth as easily pardon great finnes, as little; as the Sun doth enlighten one place with as much eate as another: To such we say, That it's their duty to hope in *Gods mercy*; that they cannot dishonour God more than by looking upon him, as one who is hardly brought to remit offences: That it is Gods will we should come to this fountain, and drink abundantly of it. We tell them, that they cannot think so much of sinne to condemn them, as they may of *the multitude of Gods mercies to save them*: To such we say, That when they have thought all they can, yet there is more in Gods mercy, than they can go to the bottom of. God is said to forget finnes, but he cannot forget his property of *mercy*. Thus you see that *mercy* is so to be held out, as the cloud was in the wilderness, it was light to the people of *Israel* to guide them, but darkness to the *Egyptian*. The Doctrine of *mercy* is indeed matter of terrour to every presumptuous sinner, for he hath nothing to do with it, but it is full of beauty and reviving to the wounded heart. Hence the whole drift of the Scripture is to represent this grace and mercy of God to an humbled sinner. This is the main scope of it. For who could or dare think of God any otherwise, but a *consuming fire*, till the Scripture hath revealed him otherwise? And indeed the Parable of a *Shepherd fetching home his lost sheep*, is comfortable; yet Christ exceedeth that Shepherd, for he sought for his sheep, as goods that he needed, that he wanted; but Christ doth for us, whom he doth not want, he is well enough without us. Again that also is a refreshing Parable of the *Father entertaining so mercifully his prodigal Sonne*; but yet Christ exceedeth that Father also; for there the Sonne came first and humbled himself, and intreated for favour; but God he doth first seek us out by his *mercy*; *We do not choose him, but he chooseth us*. Though *Vorstius* doth distinguish of special grace to believers, calling one *ordinary*, which God vouchsafeth to those who seek him in the use of means; and another *extraordinary*, which God (he saith) sometimes but rarely vouchsafeth, and that is, while men never think of God, yea in wayes of opposition to God, as the *Gentiles* and *Paul*; yet indeed we may say of all that are converted, *That God thinketh of them before they think of God*. It is he that prevents them; his grace finds them out, and prepareth them for mercy. Again, Christ compareth himself to the *Physician*; but what *Physician* healeth as he doth? Other *Physicians* they make their *Patients* sick and bleed, to help them to health; but Christ, he himself is wounded, and his blood is shed for to save us. All this is to shew, That we cannot imbolden and encourage the sincere converts enough; but the more hopefull and confident thoughts he hath of Gods mercy, the more pleasing it is to God.

Secondly, *We must not judge of Gods mercy without Scripture-light and guidance, for if we do, we shall thereby encourage our selves in wicked wayes, and yet say, God is mercifull*. And truly this is the poyson that many suck down, they judge of Gods mercy according to their own humane pity and compassion; and thereupon never consider his Justice, his Wisdome, his Holiness, as well as Mercy. So that this is diligently to be considered that we must not apprehend of God as full of *mercy* and *comfort* any otherwayes than the Scripture doth manifest him, and that will be salt to season you against the abuse of *Gods mercy*, so as to turn his grace into wantonnesse. How many are there undo themselves for want of a Scripture consideration of Gods mercy, both *Doctrinally* and *Practically*. As

In the first place. *What is the reason, that some have imbraced that old and unsavoury Doctrine of Origen, That all both men and Devils after so many years in hell, shall be released from those torments?* Why is this? But because these



these *misericordists* conceive of Gods mercy without Scripture-grounds. They think it doth not stand with the pity and compassion of God, to let so many thousands of his creatures lie roaring in hell, and he never deliver them. But is not this against Scripture, which calls it *everlasting fire*, and that there shall never be any coming out of that prison, *That of their torments there shall be no end?*

Of the Calvinists Doctrine concerning Gods absolute Decrees, and how they stand with the mercy of God.

Again in the second place, There are those that do with open mouth cry down the Calvinists as blasphemous against Gods mercy, and making God to be more unmercifull and cruel, then any Tyrant that ever lived: Because (say they) such do hold, God did by absolute, and irrelative fatal Decrees, appoint the greater part of mankind to sinne, and then for their sinne to damne them. As Tiberius, desiroes to put a vestal Virgin to death, caused her violently to be defloured, and then because she was defloured, he put her to death. But

First, Here is a false and an odious representation of the Calvinists Doctrine, and if their opinion, as they truly state it out of the Scripture, be thought to be against the nature of Gods mercy, it's because they do not consider Gods supreme dominion, his Justice and Holiness, as well as his Mercy. But that the Calvinists do not any wayes diminish the gracious and mercifull Nature of God, by their opinions in the Doctrine of Election, efficacious Conversion, &c. will easily appear to those that are candid and ingenuous. I suppose Election to be an Act of mercy, relating to our misery in Adam's fall, though the learned Doctor Twiss disputeth much against it, *Lib. 1. contra Armin. digr. 9.* For

1. They hold, That there is no man is damned, but for his sinne; Their destruction is of themselves. Neither do they say, That God by any Decree compelled Adam to sinne at first, but Adam sinned as voluntarily, and as freely, as if God had made no permissive Decree about his fall. It is true indeed we say, That God hath predetermining Decrees efficacious about what is good permissive, about what is evil; but yet we say, These Decrees do not alter the nature of second causes, but according to the nature of them, so is Gods providence attuned thereto. Therefore we acknowledge that of Austin's, *Malevola est illa misericordia, qua facit esse miserum, ut misereatur*, That is cruel mercy, which makes miserable, that it may shew mercy; Adam did voluntarily sin, so that God was not to be blamed.

Neither do we call those Decrees of God Absolute and Irrelative, as if hereby all means were excluded from accomplishing the end we are elected to. When God elects a man to salvation, we say, in this Election is comprehended holiness, as the way to happiness. And therefore to impose such an Irrelative Decree upon the Calvinists, as if their meaning was, God had decreed to save some men, whether wicked, or not wicked: That it was all one, whether prophane or godly. This is an horrible calumny. It is true, we say, it's Absolute, because God did not look to any thing in us, as a cause, or a merit, antecedently to his Election, yet we say, God elects to faith and holiness, as well as to salvation. Therefore we do not injure the mercifull Nature of God; but they do his holy, just and wise Nature; yea they diminish his grace and mercy in our Election, and attributing too much to man. For whereas the Apostle saith *Rom. 9.* It is not of him that willeth or runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy; They will make it to be as well of him that runneth, as of God that sheweth mercy: And though in words they seem to give the priority to Gods grace and mercy, yet in reality they do not. If then that of Austin be true, *Gratia non est gratia ullo modo, nisi sit gratuita omni modo*, then all those are enemies to the grace and mercy of God, who take in the least measure from it.

3. We do not enervate the mercy of God, in holding, the Election of some only



only to eternal life, because God might justly, if he had pleased, damned all, and none could have accused him for want of mercy. For hath not God bound up in chains of darkness all the apostate Angels? Are not every one of them condemned to eternal torments? Yet they are more noble and excellent creatures, than man is. Oh then the mercy of God that any is saved, seeing that all might justly be damned!

Lastly, Not to enlarge on this, God is mercifull in this Absolute Election, duly explained, because hereby a very great number are sure to be saved. God by this Decree of his, will so work in time, that they shall be called, justified, and at last glorified; for Election will obtain. Now doth not this Doctrine more commend the mercy of God, than the Arminians Conditional Decrees? Notwithstanding which, no man in the world may be saved. For notwithstanding Gods Decrees and Will, to save all men, notwithstanding Christs dying for all men, yet they acknowledge it possible, not any one man be saved. For God (they say) leaveth a man to the good use of his Free-will, he doth not alter or change by his efficacious and wonderfull grace any mans heart; and if God do no more, who then can be saved? They cannot instance in one Heathen, that ever yet used his naturals well, thereby to partake of supernaturals. So that if all be left to man, and God should not shew mercy, no one man would be saved. Therefore our Doctrine is a mercifull one, and theirs is cruel.

In the third general place, The Socinians, they blame all the Orthodox, as evacuating the mercy of God, because, we say, that the Justice of God being satisfied through the blood of Christ as a ransom, we thereby obtain remission of sinnes. Now (they say) how absurd and contradictory is this, God is satisfied by a just payment to pardon sinne, and yet it's the meer mercy of God to forgive it?

But to this we answer, That though the pardon of sinne be of Justice to Christ, yet it is wholly of mercy to us. It is not any thing we could do, that might procure pardon; if we could merit or satisfy the Justice of God by the works we do, then indeed it would not be of grace and mercy to us; but this Justice is only between Christ and the Father: So that it's wholly of mercy to us, both in respect that he hath found out a Saviour for us, as also in applying the benefits of Christs death. For though Christ be come into the world, yet how many eternally perish? It is therefore unspeakable mercy to thee, that thy sins are pardoned, that thou art converted, and so many thousands abide under the power of Satan and sinne. Therefore when Gods mercy is spoken of in pardoning of sinne, it is perpetually in respect of us, not of Christ. Thus you see, judging of Gods mercy without Scripture-light, into how many Doctrinal errors it may plunge us.

4. For want of Scripture-direction, the Papist and Antinomian oppose the mercy of God, but in extream contrary wayes. Though God be mercifull, yet he hath so ordained, that none shall partake of his mercies in time, but those who by his grace are enabled to believe and repent, as the way to salvation. Now the Papist injureth the mercy of God, for he will have his Faith, Repentance, with other holy works, the merit and cause of his salvation, disdainng to have eternal life, as meer alms from God. But the Antinomian to avoid this Scilla falls into Charybdis, he affirmeth, a mercy, and that of Justification, even while we are sinners, before we do either believe or repent. But the Scripture-mercy lieth between both.

In the next place, Let us consider, What Practical Danger we are in, by conceiving of God as a mercifull God, without Scripture-information. And

First, We are apt to flatter our selves with Gods mercy, though we allow our selves



in our sins and iniquities, whereas the Scripture speaks not a drop of mercy to such. Have you not many dreadfull examples of Gods anger and terrour as well as mercy? What was the casting of all the Angels into eternal blackness for one sinfull thought, and that the first which they were guilty of, giving them no space to repent, no day of grace, affording no means for their recovery? Is not this an instance of Gods severity? But you will say, This was to *Angels*, he is more *mercifull* to man. But consider that example of Gods Justice in drowning the whole world, save eight persons; Doth not that proclaim God is just and angry against sinne, as well as *mercifull*; not to spare the whole world, because it had corrupted its wayes, but to drown such an innumerable company of men, women and children, yea to destroy the whole earth, as it were? Oh, who can stand before the anger of God! Have we not also a formidable demonstration of Gods anger against *Sodome* and *Gomorrhah*, when fire and brimstone was rained from Heaven, to destroy those Cities, and all that did belong to them? What had the little children done? They could not be guilty of those unclean vices, but God cutteth off all. Many other instances of Gods wrath we have in Scripture, especially the day of Judgement, will be a dreadfull manifestation of it to the wicked, and therefore the Scripture will informe us in that, as well as of Gods mercy.

A second *Practical Error* (I shall conclude with) that necessarily accompanieth the thoughts of Gods mercy without Scripture-direction, is to encourage a mans self in his sinnes, because God is *mercifull*. Every wicked person turneth this honey into gall. Paul speaketh of some, who made those wretched inferences, *Let us sinne that grace may abound*. Take heed then of having any such wicked thought arising in thy heart, *God is mercifull*, therefore I will go to my lusts again: Oh no; the Scripture represents Gods mercies for another end, to repent and be converted from thy evil wayes, *Rom. 2, Knowest thou not the goodnesse of God would lead thee to repentance*. Oh then do not abuse the mercy of God! for there is a time coming when there will be no more mercy. It's called the *day of wrath*; thou shalt meet with nothing but terrour, *Ezek. 8. 18*. The Scripture speaks of *vessels of mercy*, and *vessels of wrath*, and there is no greater sign of a *vessel of wrath*, one fitted and prepared for destruction, then to grow wanton by the mercies of God, to be evil, because he is good; so much mercy abused will one day be turned into so much vengeance.





S E R M, XXXVI.

*That God not only can, but doth actually comfort his People, and how he doth it.*

2 COR. I. 4.

*Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we our selves are comforted of God.*

**I**N the former verse we had the Reasons of our blessing of God set down, by the description of that glorious attribute of his, *The Father of mercies, &c.*

In this verse the Apostle doth further amplify the cause of this duty of *Thanksgiving*, viz. *from the effect*, and fruit of this property of his, *He is not only a God of consolation*, habitually and potentially, as it were. He is not a fountain sealed up; but this Sunne doth alwayes irradiate its beams; As he is a God of consolation, so he doth comfort.

So that in the words we have the *Effect* or *Causality* attributed to God, *ὁ παρηγοῦν*, *who is comforting*, that doth never cease to do it, that never withdraweth his consolations; It's his nature to be alwayes comforting. As the Devil is called *ὁ πειράζων*, because he is alwayes tempting. The word in humane Authors is used frequently of him, who calleth another to him; but in the *New Testament* either of him that intreateth and prayeth, or of him that exhorteth, or as in the Text, *of him that comforteth*.

2. The Subject of this consolation, *us*] That is either generally all believers, or *us Apostles and Officers* in the Church. For the *Apostle* might speak this to obviate that scandal, which many were ready to take at the afflictions and persecutions of the *Apostles*, as if they were hated of God, and were nothing but impostors. Therefore some part of this Chapter is a narrative of his pressures and apologetical, in declaring the great goodness of God thereby to the Church.

3. The particular wherein, *in tribulation*] Light can come into this dark dungeon.

4. The Extent of this, *All our tribulation*] God can turn the hardest stones into bread: *All*] either of mind or body.

5. The consequent Effect of this, *That we may be able to comfort them, &c.*] God many times doth in an exemplary manner exercise the Ministers of the Gospel, that they may experimentally be able to instruct such who are tempted.

We begin with that efficiency given to God, *who comforteth, is comforting*, and observe,

*That as God is the God of all comfort, so he doth actually put forth this comfort to those that are his.*

Gods attributes may be truly affirmed of him, though they never be put forth in-

God not only can, but doth comfort his children.



into act, God would have been *Omnipotent, Mercifull, Wise*, though he had not created the world, only the creation of the world did demonstrate those Attributes. Thus God may be called, *The God of comfort*, or a *mercifull Father*, in respect of his Nature and Inclination, though actually he doth not comfort any; but God is a fountain communicating himself into streams of comfort, he will make his people taste and feel what he is by Nature. Now when it's said, *That God comforteth*, you must understand this both in *temporal* and *spiritual comforts*. That *spiritual comfort* comes alone from God is plain, because the *Spirit of God* is called the *Comforter*. We cannot have one drop of heavenly consolation, till Gods *Spirit* infuse it into us. If the children of God could have comfort when they will, would they walk so disconsolately, and cry out of their dark troubled souls as they do, but then even earthly comfort, to take delight in the lawfull contentments God doth allow us, to take delight and joy in these corporal mercies, this is also from God, *Eccles. 2. 24, 26. Eccles. 3. 13. Eccles. 5. 18.* You see the Wiseman affirmeth it often, *That a man cannot take any joy or delight even in those lawfull things, unless it be given him of God.* All comfort then of all sorts ariseth from him.

How God  
comforteth his  
people.

But let us consider the way or manner of Gods comforting. For as it is a great and profitable Question to examine, How God doth convert and sanctifie, so also, how he doth comfort? And

First, You must lay this foundation, *That God doth comfort two wayes, either immediately, when he doth by himself work upon the soul: Or mediately, when he comforteth by such means as he hath appointed thereunto.*

Let us then in the next place consider, What are those immediate workings of God upon the soul, whereby he maketh the heart joyfull? For David, *Psalm. 4.* saith, *God had put more joy into his heart, then any man can have in the abundance of all temporal mercies.* And

First, *Therefore God doth comfort by illuminating and opening the understanding and opening the understanding, to know and see the grounds and reasons of comfort.* And certainly, this is of great conducement to have the heart comforted, when the understanding is rightly convinced of the grounds of comfort. For as the dark night is apt to beget fears and terrours, so darkness in the understanding is a great cause of all that terrour and disconsolateness, which Gods own children may many times lie under. So that as God in conversion and humiliation for sinne, begins with conviction upon the heart, so also in consolation and comfort. The great impediment to a godly mans comfort, is want of spiritual knowledge, and conviction about the causes of comfort. As it was with Hagar in the wilderness, she sate weeping for her child, and gave over all as desperate, till God opened her eyes, and made her see a fountain. Thus the broken heart, judgeth it self in a wilderness destitute of all comfort, seeth nothing but matter of despair and damnation, till God enlighten the understanding about comfort-grounds in the Gospel. As for example, when the *Spirit of God* enlightens us to receive comfort, it giveth us the eye-salve:

1. *To look upon Christ revealed in the Gospel, as the full cause and ground of all our comfort, as well as on sinne.* Generally the people of God in the first workings of the soul, look upon nothing but their sins, behold nothing but sinne; but God will not let them alone in this agony; he enlightens them further, that they shall see *Christ* as well as sinne, the Gospel as well as the Law, he giveth them eyes to behold the brazen Serpent when stung. Hence the *Spirit of God*, *John 16. 9, 10.* doth not only convince of sinne, but of righteousness also. The Devil he indeed moveth in those troubled waters of thy soul, and would keep thee off from Christ, as the Disciples did the blind man, but the *Spirit of God* will not leave the soul in these wounds, in these straits, but doth carry him up from the mount of cursing to the mount of blessing. And certainly the wise men



men could not more rejoyce to see the starre, than the godly heart doth to behold Christ after the storms and tempests in his soul. Hence the Apostle *Gal. 1.* calleth it, *The revealing of the Sonne in him.* This then we are enabled to do by God, not only to know sinne in the terrour and sting of it, but also Christ in his fulness and excellency. How was *Paul* affected with this, *2 Cor. 2. 1.* *I desire to know nothing but Christ crucified?* This therefore is a special work of God to make us look with both eyes, to make thee see sinne as well as Christ, and Christ as well as sin.

2. As God doth convince the soul of Christ, what a full and glorious Saviour he is; so also in the second place, *Of our duty to receive him, and to lay hold on him.* And this is a further step to comfort, when God doth so farre open the eyes, as to see not only a full and sufficient Christ, but also that it's a duty in particular to apply this Christ, and to rest upon him for comfort and salvation. This is a further discovery still. *Paul* said, *Gal. 2.* *Who gave himself for me, and loved me:* And *Thomas* said, *My God, and my Lord.* It is one of the blessed truths discovered in the Reformation out of Popery, *That it is not our duty to believe in the general onely, that Christ is a Saviour, but to rest on him also for the pardon of my sinnes:* That this is the Faith that justifieth: That this is most acceptable and precious unto God: That unbelief not only in the general, but as it faileth in this particular, in not applying, in not appropriating Christ to the soul, is that which will damn a man. Oh then what blessed and comfortable light is that, which God bringeth into the soul, when he shall make thee see, that though a sinner, though burdened, though unworthy, yet it's thy duty to go to Christ to be eased? That he commands thee with that woman, not only to touch the hem of his garments, but to lay hold on Christ himself. This particular faith is that, which the soul is hardly convinced of. Though others may draw nigh to Christ, yet may I? But he cometh at last to be perswaded of this truth.

3. God comforts by enlightning the mind, that a comfortable, joyfull life, arising from peace with God, is a most acceptable thing to God; that it brings honour and glory to God; and that on the other side, to walk heavily, and in a dejected manner is to dishonour and reproach God. That God doth not onely look to our gracious walking, but also to our comfortable walking, and that we demonstrate the Kingdom of Heaven to be begun in us in joy, as well as in mortification, *Rom. 14. 17.* *The Kingdom of God is righteousness, and joy in the holy Ghost.* You see Joy as well as Righteousnesse; The children of God they are not quickly perswaded of this, they think such as they are, may not walk comfortably: It's not for them to rejoyce, but at last they come to see, that they were sinfully kept up by slavish fears, and servile dejections, that the Kingdome of God requireth Consolation as well as Sanctification. Thus you see the first general way, how God comforteth, viz. by enlightning the mind.

Secondly, and principally God comforteth, *By preparing and fashioning the heart, by making it fit and ready to receive comfort.* For all the while thou art enlightned only, and hast not an heart fitted to receive it, thou art like *Moses* that saw the good Land of promise, but he could not enter into it. And thus indeed it falls out sometimes, that when the mind is enlightned enough, yet the heart is heavy. They cannot delight and rejoyce in the promise; they would gladly do it; they heartily pray for it; but their heart sinketh down like a stone within them. Therefore God hath a further degree in comforting, and that is by raising up the heart, by making it ready to receive consolation. For as God can humble the proud heart, and soften the hard heart, so he can easily comfort and revive the grieved heart. Thus as it is in sanctification; it's not enough for God to illuminate the mind, unless he also change the heart, and make us to will  
and



and to do: So it's not enough for God to teach us our duty about comfort, but actually to work the heart for it. Hence 2 Cor. 7. 6. you have a notable Attribute given to God, *God that comforteth those that are cast down*, Isa. 51. 11, 12. See there with what command God speaketh, *That they shall have comfort; They shall obtain gladnesse and joy*. So that as God is above the heart in conversion, thus he is also in consolation: He will comfort, and what man or Devil can hinder it? As in matter of grace God declareth, as Omnipotency and Sovereignty, when he saith, *I will take away the heart of stone, and give an heart of flesh*: so in matter of consolation, I will take away the grieved, the troubled, the despairing heart, and give an heart of joy, peace, and heavenly rest of soul.

In the third place, *God doth comfort* removendo prohibens, *by removing whatsoever is obstructive and destructive of comfort*. As

1. *By chaining up the Devil, who is not only an enemy to the graces, but also the comforts of Gods people*. As the holy Ghost is a Comforter, so the Devil is the prince of darkness, a Tempter to unbelief, to sad, and foul, yea and body-murdering thoughts. God therefore doth restrain him in his temptations, in his sad suggellions. For we see by Job's instance, the Devil cannot go any further, than he is licensed by God himself.

2. *God doth subdue not onely the Devil without, but also that corruption within, which doth vehemently incline to unbelieving, vexing and tormenting thoughts*. For although a man naturally be in security, in self-ease and carnal presumption, yet when once awakened for sinne, and feeling the terrour of the Lord thereby, then we are as peevish, as froward against the promises, as ever formerly we were against the precepts; Adam endeavours to hide himself from God upon his sinne. We see in Cain and Judas, what sad and dreadfull effects the guilt of conscience would work in every one, did not God command those winds and tempests to be still. Therefore God doth repress these, and thereby we are more ready for comfort.

3. *God doth by his grace prevent and keep us from sinne, he daily preserveth us from many sad falls, which if plunged into, we should presently chase away all our comfort*. When David was lett, and fell into those gross sins, all his joy was immediately lost; therefore he complaineth of his broken bones, and prayeth for joy to be restored to him; what horreur, what hell would quickly be raised in thy soul every day, every night, upon every temptation? Did not the grace of God preserve thee? Spira lost all comfort by Apostasie: And thus many Christians did in times of persecution, in a great measure by their revolt, though they recovered again. Therefore little dost thou know, how much God worketh for thy comfort by preventing such sins, which would make horrible wounds and gashes in thy soul.

Lastly, *God comforts thee by delivering thee from all such Doctrines, though taught by many of great and eminent learning, which yet in their own nature tend to make the heart uncomfortable*. How wonderfully did God work for the comfort of Luther, who professed the unspeakable tremblings and fears of soul he was in, and being in captivity by the Doctrine of works, as then taught in Popery, he could have no comfort, but often wished he had never been a man, till God comforted him by delivering him from those false Doctrines? Thus the Doctrine of the Apostasie of true Saints doth utterly dash all comfort from the believer; he must necessarily be in miserable tormenting fears all the day long. And so have we done with that immediate way of Gods comforting.

The Mediate way, is by those means which he hath appointed to be as Conduits running wine for us. And they are

1. The Scriptures. David professeth much quickning and comfort he had by them. So Rom. 15. 4. *The comfort of the Scriptures*. They are a cordial, a tree of



of life; They direct to comfort, exhort to comfort all such as are poor in spirit.

2. The *Ministers*, They are sons of consolation and comfort. The Word they preach is *εὐαγγέλιον*, the joyfull noise. Even the very feet of such who bring the glad tidings, are said to be blessed; They have a tongue of the learned, to speak a seasonable word for such as are contrite in spirit. They are not to quench the broken reed. Though to the obstinate sinner, we bring the hammer and fire of the Word; yet to the broken heart, we bring balm and oil.

Lastly, God comforts by the *Sacraments*. In them he doth peculiarly seal peace and comfort. Therefore is the *Lords Supper* called *εὐχαριστία*, a giving of thanks. Thus doth the Lord by these means abundantly provide for our consolation.



## SERM. XXXVII.

*That Believers only are the Subjects of the Comforts and Consolations of God.*

2 COR. I. 4.

*Who comforteth us in all our tribulation.*

THE next particular, which followeth in order, as the Text stands divided, is the *Subject* whom God doth thus comfort, and that is said to be *Us*, who comforteth us; that is, both *us believers*, in a general sense, and *us Apostles*, in a particular manner. For they being like *Uriah* in the fore-front of the battel; and more assaulted by the Devil within, and enemies without, they do need the greater comfort. But we shall handle it in the most large sense, and observe,

*That God is a God of all comfort unto believers only.*

God is a God of comfort onely to believers.

For this [*Us*] in the Text, is not only determinative, to shew who they are into whose wounds God doth thus pour oyl, but also restrictive to such and such only. Indeed the wicked ones of the world, may have comfort in outward mercies; They may rejoyce in the good things of this life; and this is acknowledged by *Solomon*, To be a gift of God; but these worldly joyes do become a sinne, and a curse to them. The Poet said well,

*O miseri quorum gaudia crimen habet!*

Their very joyes do become like wine to men in a feavor, though refreshing a little, yet inflaming and increasing the disease more. So that these worldly joyes, being not universal, nor pure and unmixed; yea being the seed of eternal grief and torment, therefore they may be well excluded from the name of joy, and the Doctrine be truly asserted, *That God is a God of consolation onely to believers.*

Let us explicate this truth. And

Y

First,



First, We are to know, *That God doth not only vouchsafe grace, but comfort also and delight to his people, in the exercise of those graces.* He doth not only give bread that strengthens, but wine that makes the heart glad. *Grace*, that carrieth us out to honour God, to love him, and live to him; but *comfort*, that is for our encouragement, that is to sweeten and facilitate the heart in doing so. So that if a man have never so much grace and holiness, yet if he want this consolation, as you see it was with *Job*, with *Jeremiah*, with *David*, when *Psal. 51.* he prayed so earnestly for the restoring of it again to him, all his desirable things perish. *Christ* himself under those agonies he conflicted with, had an Angel to comfort him. So that you see they are two distinct gifts of God; to give *Grace*, and to give *comfort*; therefore the *holy Ghost* hath a two-fold work, both to sanctifie, and also to comfort; yet though distinct, God doth many times joyn them together; yea there is some unusual impediment, if joy doth not alwayes follow grace, and that like *Castor* and *Pollux*, they do not alwayes appear together. Therefore *Godlinesse* is comprehended under the name of *gladnesse* in that exprellion, *Pf. 1. 45. 7.* applied to *Christ*, *Heb. 1. 9.* *Thou hast anointed him with the oyl of gladness*, as *Christ* was; so also are his members thus anointed with the oyl of gladnesse. God then doth not only sanctifie and make his people holy, but he also doth fill their hearts with joy and gladness. Thus *Acts 9. 31.* *They in the Churches walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the holy Ghost:* Only when we say, *That God giveth his people comfort as well as grace.* You must know the comforts are of two sorts; Sometimes they are concomitant, so that even in the very exercises of grace, they find unspeakable joy and sweetness. The very Heathens had some glimmering of this, when they said *Virtus was sibi ipsi primum, Virtue itself was a reward, as well as duty*, because of the great tranquillity and contentation of mind that it brought to the soul. Even as wicked actions have an immediate horreur and remorse of conscience accompanying them. And then

2. There are *consequent joyes*, which follow after the work is done, as *Paul* found at the 12th verie, *This is our rejoycing, the testimony of a good conscience.* So that a man of an ill conscience, who hath stings from that, though all the world applaud him, yet he cannot have any true solid joy. *Quid proderit tibi non habere consciunt, habenti conscientiam.* The *Martyrs* they found concomitant joyes in their most dreadfull sufferings, *Act. 5. 41.* *The Apostles went away rejoycing, that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christs Name.* They minded not their stripes, nor their reproach and disgrace, but they went away rejoycing, not from hearing the Word, from prayer, from such holy Ordinances, but even from scourges and stripes. But in many other duties and services for God, though for the present we may feel no joy, yet there are *subsequent joyes* that may arise long after. For as sinne may not sting for a while, as we see in *Joseph's* brethren, the guilt of their conscience awakened them many years after: So the comfort of holy duties, though for the present thou mayest not apprehend them, yet sometimes or other God will revive them.

Secondly, *Although God giveth not only grace, but comfort to his people, yet we are not to serve him onely for comforts sake, but for his own sake, and that while he denieth us the breasts of consolation to suck on, yet we are as fervently and zealously to obey him, as ever.* It is many times the sad complaint of Gods children, that they want comfort, and thereupon are dejected and discouraged; they care not for praying, for hearing; they have no heart for the Ordinances, and all because they find their hearts like a barren wilderness full of howling beasts. Oh, when they have comfort, then they can runne the way of Gods Commandments, then they have fire in their bosome! But when this is gone, they become like a stone, or a lump of earth. But although it be true, *That the joy of the Lord is our strength,*



strength, Nehem. 8. 10. yet for all that it is too low and mercenary to serve him onely for comfort. This is *Amor concupiscentia*, not *amicitia* towards God. The grace of love carrieth us to God so, that we choose him, and delight in him above all things; that though he should not give us Heaven and everlasting glory, yet we were to love him, because he is the *supream and most excellent good*: How much more than are we to serve God; to be diligent in his work, though we find not those experimental suavities upon our souls for the present? Therefor thou art to deny thy self in this matter of joy, when God dispenseth it to thee, walk thankfully, humbly, and fruitfully under it: And when in darkness, in desolateness of soul, yet let not thy soul abate in love and service to God. The *Stoick* was so severe, that he thought he could not be virtuous, who did any virtuous action for the delight and sweetness that followeth it: They would not have *Virtus propter voluptatem*, but *voluptas propter virtutem*. How much more should our Christianity teach us to preferre Gods will, and his honour, above all consolations. If *Job* said, *Though he kill me, yet I will trust in him*; then do thou, though when thou askest for bread, he give thee a stone, when thou askest for fish he give thee a serpent, yet still say, I will own him as a Father, honour him as a Father. *Christ* when he was in those agonies, and destitute of all comfort, yet he did not refuse to accomplish the will of God.

Thirdly, *As God giveth comfort to believers, so he doth it proportionably and suitably to their tryals, necessities and wants. Greater tryals need greater comforts; greater temptations need greater consolations.* Thus the Apostle at the next verse, *As our sufferings abound, so our consolation also aboundeth through Christ.* One drop of honey is not enough to sweeten the salt waters of the sea; neither can small consolations equal great afflictions. Hence the wisdom and goodness of God is most remarkable, that he reserveth his comforts for such times and seasons, when the soul doth most want them. Now if ever, the Lord must comfort, else they shall be overwhelmed, as in the time of our first conversion to God, when our sins lie with all their weight upon our backs, when we see nothing but terour, which way soever we look; we are in strong pangs and agonies of soul! The Devil also taketh his opportunity then to cast in all his *fiery darts*. Thus when the soul of a man is filled with fear, doubts, seeing no way but hell and damnation, at such a time God comes in with his best wine; then God delights to speak to the heart of such, *Psal. 94. 19. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.* The Hebrew word signifieth *perplexed thoughts*, like boughs on a tree intangled one with another, that a man cannot part them; such were his thoughts, so intricate, so enfolded one within another, that he knew not what to resolve on; what to determine, yet the comforts of God did refresh his soul. Thus new converts have many times more comfort then ever they shall have all their life time, they needed them most then.

Again, *When the people of God have any great props and supports of comfort and joy taken away from them, then commonly God comes in with more than ordinary comfort.* This makes him to be styled, *The Father of the fatherlesse, and Judge of widows*; such who need help and comfort most. When *David* was in danger of losing his life and Kingdom, and that by his unnatural rebellious sonne *Absolom*, when *Shimei* reviled him, when he fled up and down with his Army, with ashes on his head, weeping and wailing, as he went up the hill, yet even at that time, *Psal. 4. 6.* he saith, *God had put more gladnesse into his heart, then they could have in their harvest joy.* So the Disciples, when they were to be parted from *Christ*, he was not to be cor-



porally present with them; upon this, how greatly did sorrow fill their hearts? What should the sheep do without their Shepherd, the Chickens without their Hen? Yet saith our Saviour, *I will not leave you comfortlesse*, *John 16*. Christ would send his Spirit a Comforter in his room. Thus you see Gods way, when he taketh away the comfort of an Husband, a Father, a Friend, he will be in stead of all these to us. Those conditions which we thought would have broken our hearts, he made even joyfull to us.

Lastly, When God calleth his people to any *high degrees of self-denial*, even to *Martyrdome* it self, then as their grief and fears would *supera-bound*; so also their joyes and comforts will be above them. The *Martyrs* never felt such joy and delight in all their lives time, as they did in a dark dungeon, and in the flames of fire. Therefore Gods children should not finfully torture their souls with thoughts: what if God should call them out to suffer, to be imprisoned, to be burnt at the stake? Oh they should deny Christ over and over again, prove wretched Apostates! They must not judge thus according to their present disposition; but remember that God will proportion *strength and comfort* to their exercises, and give them *Giants strength*, if he lay a *Giants burden* on them.

Fourthly, God doth not only do good to his people in giving them joy, but to shew how ready and willing he is, the Scripture saith, *That it is a joy to God to do any good for us, he rejoyceth to bestow his mercy upon us*. This is spoken after the manner of men, to denote with what willingnesse he vouchsafeth his favours to us. See what a wonderfull expression the Prophet useth, *Zephani. 3. 17*. while God is said to be *in the midst of his people, saving of them, even because he doth thus*; he is said, *To rejoyce over them with joy, to rest in his love, and to joy over them with singing*. By this we see, that while God giveth us grace, and other mercies, whereof joy is a chief one, he himself rejoyceth therein. Even as *Aristotle* observeth of a liberal man, *That he takes more joy in giving, than he that receiveth the benefit, can do in receiving of it*. God then giveth thee grace and joy not unwillingly, not difficultly; but he himself rejoyceth in making thy heart joyfull. See a sweet place to confirme this also, *Isai. 61. 5*. *As the Bridegroom rejoyceth over the Bride, so shall thy God rejoyce over thee*.

Fifthly, *This joy, God giveth believers, is a spiritual joy*. Worldly joy is like the *culinary* fire which goeth out, if it have not dainty fuell; but this is like the *elementary*, that needeth no *pabulum*, but continueth of it self without such additaments. Though friends die, though the creatures break under us, yet this joy abideth the same still. It is a *spiritual joy*, because seated in the *spiritual part* of a man most. So that we do not speak here so much of a sensible bodily joy, but of that which is rational and seated in the soul. It is true, when the soul is greatly affected by way of sympathy and redundancy, it doth overflow even to the bodily part of a man also; but the *Subject*, wherein this joy is immediately and properly seated, is in the *soul and heart* of a man. Hence it is that the heart is so often said in the Scripture, *To rejoyce in the Lord*, which is the mind and the will. Therefore as a godly soul may truly repent, when yet it cannot shed bodily tears; so it may truly rejoyce, when it hath not a bodily gladnesse upon it. So that as the *Wiseman* saith of *carnal laughter*, that even in that, *the heart may be sad*; So also, though in bodily sadnesse, yet the conscience of a man may have great tranquillity and joy. It is also a *spiritual joy*, because the motives of it are chiefly from *spiritual objects*; It's joy in the Lord, and joy in the holy Ghost. *Luke 10. 10*. Our Saviour com-

manded



manded his Disciples, Not to rejoyce in that they could work miracles, and cast out Devils, but because their name was written in Heaven. It's spiritual also in its operations. For whereas worldly joy enters into men, as the Devils did into the Swine, hurling them headlong into Hell. This makes the heart more active, more fruitfull; It's like the Spirit to Ezekiel's wings, like the wind that made the dry bones gather together and live. It's like Elisha's fiery chariot, mounting him up into Heaven; whereas grief and sorrow are like the wormes that eat into the wood, and devour the strength of it.

Lastly, This joy is given by God to believers, though formerly great and grievous sinners. For we might think, such as have been the chiefest of many thousands in sinning and blaspheming against God, though God should have pity and mercy upon them, yet he should never give them any comfort in this life. You would think their former lusts, pride, uncleanness, and excess of riot, should be like a mill-stone alwayes about their neck; They should go mourning to the grave, never able to remove their finnes out of their sight; but thinking they pursue them as close every moment, as Asahel did Joab to damn us: Yet even to such, after God becomes reconciled with them, God it may be giveth more comfort, than to others. Great finnes when repented of, cannot barre off great consolations; and indeed, such need strong consolations, for their great conflicts and agonies. If Christ put not both armes under them, they hardly keep from fainting away. Mary Magdalen and Peter were in a special manner owned and comforted by Christ, though they had deeply wounded their souls with sinne. We see Paul, though so notorious a wretch against Christ, yet when converted, God doth not upbraid him with former rebellions, but in the number of those who have peace and joy, he reckons himself; and the truth is, such are most humble, tender and melting under comforts. What (Lord) such a beast, such a Devil as I have comfort? What (Lord) I that might have been a Cain, a Judas, crying out, My sins are greater than I can bear? That like Dives might have begged for one drop of water to cool my scorching heat, but have been denied? Shall such an one have comfort and consolation?





## SERM, XXXVIII.

*How God will comfort his People in all both their spiritual and temporal Afflictions, which all the Art of Philosophy can never do.*

2 COR. 1. 4.

*Who comforteth us in all our tribulation.*

**T**He second particular in this Text hath been dispatched, viz. the Subject whom God comforteth [*Us*] *Apostles and believers*, in the general; such onely have a right and interest in comforts. Why such onely have a right, will be treated on more opportunely in the procedure of the verse.

We therefore go forward to the third part of the Text, as it stands divided, and that is the *Object matter* wherein this comfort is communicated to us, and that is for the nature of it said to be *θλίψις*, *Tribulation*; and for the extension of it, *all tribulation*. *Tribulation*] The Greek word signifieth, *Such an affliction as doth even oppresse and squeeze a man, as it were*. Hence it is translated sometimes *persecution*, Act. 11. 19. The Churches afflictions are called *persecutions*, to shew the voluntary, malicious endeavours of her enemies, who run up and down to seize on such as belong to Christ; which implieth also, that the godly did not rashly and sinfully put themselves into their enemies hands; but that according to Christs command they did flee, when their adversaries sought for them. And this may be done in faith, not in sinfull fear, as appeareth, Heb. 11. where some are said to *hide themselves in caves and holes*, yet by faith. But the word is commonly rendred *tribulation*, having sometimes the epithete *μεγάλη* added to it, as Mat. 24. 21. And the Latine word *tribulation* answers the Greek well, which (say some) comes from the *flail of the thresher*, that bruisseth the corn: Or (as others) from *thistles* that are sharp and vexing. Well, the word signifieth such a *tribulation*, as is bruising, pricking, sadly molesting: Yet as out of the same root cometh the sweet *Rose*, as well as the sharp prickles, so from the same condition shall arise joy as well as grief. Observe,

God will comfort his children in all their affliction whatsoever.

*That there is no tribulation, or affliction Gods people can fall into, but God will comfort them therein.*

The Text saith, *all tribulation*, let it be what it will be. Do not say, Every tribulation but mine; Take heed of thinking thy dungeon is so dark, that no ray or beam of this Sunne can come unto thee. For as Paul argueth in another case, Heb. 2. 8. *In that all things are put under subjection to Christ, it is manifest he left nothing that is not put under him*. So in that God comforteth in *all tribulation*, it is manifest, that there is no tribulation exempted, or left out. Take heed of that prophane Question, *Is God the God of the hills, as well as of the valleys?* Think



Think not that God is limited, so as if there were some kind of *water* that he cannot turn into *wine*; some *stones* that he cannot convert into *bread*. But let us explain this. And

First, *God doth comfort his people in all tribulations, for the several kinds of them.* The tribulations that may fall upon the people of God are of such different sorts, that it is very difficult to number them, as it is the sand upon the Sea-shore; yet we may divide them into these two sorts, The *soul-troubles* in the general, or *spiritual ones*; and the *external, or temporal ones*. In both these God will not leave his people comfortless. Their *spiritual troubles*, they may empty themselves into several chanel. As

Propositions explaining the Observation.

1. *There is a soul-trouble arising in the heart, because of Gods displeasure for sinne.* This trouble *David* doth sadly groan under many times, and this is the greatest evil that the godly can grapple with. When God hideth his face from *David*, it's neither his Kingdom, or success, or any great prosperity he hath, that can be so much as a drop of water to cool his thirity scorched soul. *Job* also was in this troubled condition, when he complaineth, *That the arrows of the Almighty did stick in him.* What comfort or joy could *Job* find in any thing in the world, while God was thus frowning on him? So that the soul in this case is most remote from comfort. Bring him riches, honours, you do but as they that gave vinegar and gall to Christ for to drink, you increase sorrow more: yet at last we find both *David* and *Job* were comforted; God could and did of that chaos and dark confusion they felt within them, work much light and joy. And certainly, if there be any of Gods children that live and die without comfort, having no evidence or assurance of Gods favour; this is not because God cannot comfort, or because God is not gracious and pitifull to such, but because God seeth it best not to give comfort to such. Seeing therefore it's God that breaketh the heart, it's he that makes the soul tremble, it is he that convinceth of sin, and humbleth the soul under it: So it is the same God only that can command comforts; when he speaketh the word, all sorrow and tormenting fears shall flie away, as dark mists before the glorious light of the Sun. Oh then, let such dejected and overwhelmed souls remember the Omnipotency of God in comforting, as well as in other things! Say, O Lord, my heart would break and break again, if I had nothing but men or Angels to comfort; but I have to do with thee who art the Father of spirits, and so canst put into the soul gladnesse of heart, as well as grace.

Several sorts of soul or spiritual troubles, in all which God comforts his children.

A second spiritual trouble is, *The want of that sanctifying and mortifying power they desire against their lusts.* They find the reliques of corruption too prevalent; their hearts are not in their own power; They complain and say, I command my hands, and they move as I would have them; I stirre my feet, and they obey presently; but when I charge my soul to be heavenly, believing, to be chearfull, patient, it doth not at all yeeld to me. *Paul*, Rom. 7. did in a most pathetical manner complain of this conflict and agony with him, *The evil he would not do, that he did.* As these imperuous lusts are a burden, so the deadness, barrenness and hardness of his heart: Oh often doth he cry out of his soul, as like the mountains of *Gilboa*, on whom no dew doth fall, like a parched and dried wilderness, and he knoweth not how to come out of it, yet even in these sad, perplexed thoughts God comes in with comfort, when his heart affords none, when all within riseth up against him; yet as it was with *Paul*, his complaints shall be turned into praises, *I thank God in Jesus Christ.*

A third *Soul-tribulation* may be from *Satans temptations*: He is called the tempter, he is said to have his fiery darts, he hath his buffetings. We see how fiercely he assaulted *Christ* himself; and as for the incestuous person by *Satans* devices, he was almost swallowed up with sorrow. And indeed, what horrid suggestions of blasphemy, self-murder, and whatsoever is most terrible and amazing, will

not



not he assault the godly soul with, if God bind him not up. Well doth the Scripture compare him to a *roaring Lion*; what can a poor *Lamb* do, if he fall upon it? And truly no more could the poor humbled sinner stand before all the temptations and oppositions of *Satan*, if Gods grace did not interpose; yet even in this hellish darkness, when the soul is apt to judge its condition, like those that are damned in hell; when he is ready to conclude, God hath forsaken him for ever, that the express signs and characters of a cast-away are upon him, as he thinketh, yet of this Whales-belly, from the mouth of hell, God doth raise him, and give him *comfort*; yea many times those have the greatest *comforts*, that have the greatest exercises of this kind; and therefore the Lord did leave them in this black night, that the day might be the sweeter and more welcome.

Lastly, The *Souls-trouble* may arise from the breaches it hath made by *Apostasie*, and falling into great sins after it hath known God. And these commonly do give a mortal blow to all our former comfort. You see it in *David*, *Psal. 51.* when he complaineth of his *broken bones*, praying to have joy restored to him. Some have thought that *David* never had such comfort again as formerly. Certainly the godly in such fals sinne hainously, because of the experience they have of Gods favour, and the bitterness of sinne, therefore for them to revolt from God is an high aggravation: As if the *Prodigal son*, after he had been entertained in his Fathers house, and feasted with the fatted calf, should have gone to his husks again, how intollerable would that have been? Well, but for all this, this sad condition of a *gradual Apostate*, and revolter, is not without ground of comfort, when truly humbled and debased before God. Doth not God speak graciously, *Jer. 3. 22.* *Return ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings?* And see how this mercifull offer is imbraced, *Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.* She pleadeth her interest and right to God howsoever. Thus also God promiseth, *Hos. 14. 4.* *He heal their backsliding.* So that although when the conscience hath been the second time bruised; when thou hast been twice as it were in the new birth, thou must look for greater pains and agonies, yet God can, and doth *comfort* such also. *Peter* speaks of joy *unspeakable, and full of glory*, which the people of God have, though he had greatly revolted from Christ his master. So that manna may be had in this wilderness also.

How God comforteth his people in outward tribulations.

The second kind of troubles are *outward*, and these are also innumerable, *Act. 14. 22.* *We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of Heaven.* We must expect like Christ to be *men of sorrows*: for we are to suffer with him, if we will reign with him. Now two sorts of *troubles* there are in which God will give *comfort*, and in them all troubles are comprehended.

1. *There are troubles, such as we bring upon our selves by our own folly and sins.* We have provoked God to be angry, and to take away many outward mercies from us. Now because our sins, and our iniquities have done all this, therefore it is that we may justly expect that God will deny all *comfort*. We might think it is true, when we suffer for Gods sake, when we are persecuted for righteousness sake, then Christ will take us into his *wine-fellar*, and bid us, *Drink abundantly.* But it is my vile heart, my proud heart, my loose and negligent walking that hath brought all this evil upon me, and what comfort then can I expect from God? But even in this condition, such is the *grace* and *mercy* of God, that although our sins have brought evil upon us, yet if humbled under them, and bemoaning of them, we shall find God for to *comfort* us. When *David*, *Psal. 4.* had that overflowing joy which he saith, *God put into his heart, more than all harvest joy*, yet he was at that time in very sad exigencies, pursued by his son, and driven out of *Jerusalem*, and this God threatned as the fruit of his sinne; but behold all this, God giveth him *comfort*: And the truth is, when humbled for our sinnes, then the nature of these afflictions are altered, they become *paternal* and *medicinal chastisements*, they are arguments of Gods love to us; we may rejoyce in them



as testimonies thereof; for so *Heb. 12.* and *Rev. 3.* it is said, *Whom God loveth he chasteneth.* God makes as the Physician an excellent antidote of that which is poison, and so the fruit of thy sins becometh great matter of thankfulness, as *David* acknowledged, when he said, *Out of very thankfulness thou hast afflicted me.* And as for the second kind of afflictions, which are only for the exercise of graces, when we are persecuted not for the evil in us, but the good appearing, as the case of the *Martyrs* was; then God giveth us comfort with full measure, pressed down, and yet flowing over; witness the *Apostles*, who went away rejoicing, because they were accounted worthy to suffer all things for *Christ's* sake. The *Martyrs* also had more joy in their troubles than ever they had in their prosperity, and it is of those tribulations the Scripture speaketh of. Indeed some *Philosophers* have essayed upon such a comfort, as *Epicurus* said, *If a wise man were burnt in Phalaris his Bull, he would say, Dulce est, & ad me nihil pertinet, This is a sweet thing, and doth not at all hurt me.* But these were Book sayings. No *Philosophers* ever endured misery for their Sects, as *Christians* have done for the truth of *Christ*. But you may say, What is that by which God comforts his people in all their tribulations? Hath the Scripture any higher grounds than *Philosophy*? *Philosophy* is called *animi medicina*; and as there were several Sects of them, so they had different principles to comfort; for there was no rheum treated on more by them than this; only some principles were contrary to others; for some perswaded this as a special help to premeditate on evils before they came. Others they refused this, as making a man miserable before he was so. Others supported themselves with the thoughts of necessity, and that it could not be otherwise. But of all these we may say, as *Job* to his friends, *Ye are miserable comforters*, and are of no more advantage then the rending of garments, or pulling off the hair in grief, which *Bion* derided in one, as if a bald head would take away grief. We therefore conclude, *That no Philosophers had the true art or grounds of comfort, and that*

No Philosopher ever had the true grounds of comfort.

1. *Because they were wholly ignorant of Jesus Christ, in whom alone is all the cause of comfort.* Therefore he is called *our Peace*, and he is said to be the *Prince of peace*. *Felicitissimus est cui non est opus felicitate*, and such an one is the man in *Christ*, for he will never thirst more that hath drunk of that fountain. No sinne, no guilt, no curse can be removed, but by the blood of *Christ*. Inasmuch that all their *Philosophical* precepts about comfort were as the influence of the Moon, which doth rather rotten than ripen in respect of the Sunnes influence.

2. *They were without the Spirit of Christ the efficient cause of comfort.* *Christ* is the subject matter in whom alone we can have comfort; and the *Spirit of God* is the efficient cause that doth alone give a comfortable and glad heart.

3. *They were altogether unbelieving of a Resurrection to eternal glory, which is an admirable ground of all true joy.* This the *Apostle* presseth against immoderate sorrow about those that are dead, *Not to grieve as those that are without hope.*

Lastly, *They were wholly unacquainted with the life of faith, that is only instrumental to receive joy.*

*Use of Exhortation*, in all thy tribulations to look up to God in *Christ* for comfort. Thou runnest to this creature to comfort, and thou thinkest this and that condition would comfort thee; but how can the chancel have any thing in it, if the fountain doth not give it? Say not, it's thy affliction, so greatly to be aggravated, that makes thee disconsolate: No, it is for want of Gods presence in it.





## SERM. XXXIX.

*What are these Apples which Christ refresheth his Spouse with? Or what are those Scripture-grounds of comfort, which support the hearts of Gods children under all their afflictions?*

2 COR. I. 4.

*Who comforteth us in all our tribulation.*

Gods children  
deficient in a  
two-fold re-  
spect concern-  
ing Gods  
comforts.

There is no tribulation either for the kind or degree of it, but God can and doth comfort his people therein. It is therefore requisite to know what are those cordial comforts, what is that balm and oyl by which he healeth the wounds of his afflicted ones. For seeing Gods comforts do farre exceed all Philosophical remedies, as much as the Sunne doth a Glowworm: And Paul's admirable temperament, *I know how to abound, and how to want*, doth infinitely transcend that so much celebrated carriage of Socrates, who was noted to be alwayes *Eodem vultu*, let whatsoever befall him. It is very usefull to know, what are these Apples of comfort, as the Church calleth for, *Cant. 2. 5*. And the rather this is to be done, because many of Gods children are deficient in a three-fold respect about Gods consolations. For either

1. *They are in a great manner ignorant of what foundations and sure grounds they have of comfort.* They do not know what fountains of living water they may abundantly bathe themselves in. They are as Elisha's servant, who though there was a great host of Angels to help him, yet he did not see them. So that the Spirit of God doth not only illuminate us in the matter of duty, but also in matter of comfort; hence he is called, *The Comforter*. Or

2. *Though they know many arguments of comfort, yet their memory faileth them*, that in the very hour of their temptations, in the midst of their furious assaults, they forget what comfortable supports they might make use of. So that it is good to preach of these principles of consolation, that thereby we may be remembrancers to you, and put you in mind of that joy, which in the midst of your afflictions, your corruptions, and the Devils temptations are so apt to strike out. As the Disciples were sometimes blamed for their forgetfulness, they did not remember the miracle of loaves. Thus also the children of God, may often rebuke themselves, and with David say, *Why wast thou cast down, O my soul? And why wast thou so troubled within thee?* Hadst thou thought on such a promise, such a place of Scripture? Hadst thou remembred such a precious and sweet truth, the temptation had not prevailed so much upon thee.

What are these  
good things  
that God hath  
prepared for  
those that love  
him to com-  
fort them.

Come we then to lead you up into the Mount of transfiguration, let us see even in this life, as farre as our narrow hearts can comprehend, *What are the good things God hath prepared for those that love him?* And

First, Take this for a foundation, *That God comforts only through and by the Scriptures.*



*Scriptures.* He must enter into this pool, that will feel these consolations descending upon him, he must buy this field of the Scriptures, that will have this pearl hidden there. *The Spirit of God* is that indeed which doth efficiently reach to the soul, and make it to receive comfort; but the means by which, or the harp (as it were) whereby the evil spirit of sorrow and dejection is removed, is by the word of God: So that as the Spirit of God doth powerfully change and alter the heart yet the word is organically and instrumentally used for that end. So though the *Spirit of God* be the *Comforter*, yet it is through the Word. Hence the Apostle *Rom. 15. 4.* *That we through comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.* And *David* doth not only admire the word of God, because it forewarneth of sinne, quickeneth up to duty, but also because it was a reviving, comforting Word, whereby he was kept from fainting, and being utterly overwhelmed in his troubles. And this is the more to be considered by the godly, that so they may not be deluded by false joyes. When the Devil is said to *transform himself into an Angel of light*, 2 Cor. 11. 14. that is, into light of comfort, as well as of truth, There are false joyes, there are comforts from the Devil, as well as doctrines of the Devil. The *Papist* hath his comforts. The *Socinian*, the *Antinomian*, all these have a spirit of delusion in their joyes, as well as in their opinion. The Spirit of God doth first lead into truth, before it vouchsafeth comfort. But we detain you too long.

The first ground therefore of Scripture, that may be had out of the treasury thereof, is this, viz. *That all the tribulations we fall into, they are precisely determined by God as a Father out of much love, both in regard of the beginning of them, the degree of them, as also the continuance of them.* And if this truth be well rumiated and digested, here is matter of comfort enough; here is more oyl then we have vessels to receive. This the Scripture doth frequently insinuate, *Matth. 5.* *Your heavenly Father knoweth what you have need of.* But especially *Heb. 12. 9, 10.* the Apostle declareth at large, *That because we are sons, because God loveth us, and is a Father, therefore he doth chasten us;* and so if we give reverence to earthly parents, because they correct us, as the Apostle implieth, How much more ought we to bless God for his fatherly love to us in correcting of us? *Out of very faithfulness, saith David, thou hast afflicted me, for before that came, he went astray.* So then, he who is taught by Scripture, he seeth as much of love, as much of a Father in these tribulations, as in any outward mercies. Whereas therefore they said, *If thou art the Sonne of God come down from the crosse:* the godly man saith on the contrary, because he is the Son of God, he will ascend up to the Crosse, when his Father commands him: hence afflictions are spoken of by way of gift, *To you it is given to suffer;* and they are called, *The precious trial of our faith.* Say then as Christ, *Shall I not drink of the Cup which my Father hath given me?* And because he is a Father, and he makes his afflictions medicinal, therefore they are stinted and measured by him, both for the time, when they shall begin, thy tribulations fall not out when the Devil and thy enemies would bring them upon thee; but when Gods time is come, as you see they could never touch Christ, till he said, *His time was come.* So that as God is said to determine the bounds of mens habitations, so he hath also of the afflictions of his children; they come not sooner or later than thy Father in wisdom had appointed. Now as winter and cold is necessary in its season, as well as Summer in its season, and the night hath its use as well as the day: Thus a time of tribulation is as necessary, as a time of rest and quietness. There is a great deal of mercy to thee in the very time of thy trouble; unless the grain of Corn fall in the earth and die, it cannot be fruitfull; this Christ applied to himself, and is also true of every Christian. As the time is thus prefixed, so the kind of it, with the measure and degree of it. *Revel. 2. 10.* *The Devil shall cast some of you into prison.* The Apostle also *Heb. 11.* speaketh of the several sorts

What grounds  
of comfort the  
Scriptures  
afford un-  
to us.



of tribulations the Saints were exercised with; and if *Gods providence* reacheth to the *Sparrows fall on the ground*, yea to the *hair falling from the head*, how much more to the head it self, to man himself? Is not this then a true solid ground of comfort, to think that thy heavenly Father knowing thy temptations, and what will do thee most good, hath appointed thee to drink of this cup of an affliction, rather than another? Know, that that very tryal upon thee, how contrary soever to thy flesh and blood, yet is the best and most profitable affliction of any in the world to thee: other afflictions would be like contrary physick to a disease, do more hurt than good.

Lastly, This heavenly Father hath not only appointed the *time*, the *kind*, the *degree* of thy tribulation, but also the *time of deliverance from it*. And this is also a great comfort to know, that the tribulation shall not stay an hour longer, then while it may do good to thee; he will not take one drop of blood more from thee then is necessary to prevent thy disease, or abate it. So *Rev. 2. 10. Some should be cast into prison for ten dayes*. You see here God had determined the time. Even as the *Artificer* knoweth how long the gold must be in the fire, to take away the dross, and will not suffer it to abide any longer. This the *Psalmist* made use of in his Prayer for the Church, *The time to favour her, yea the set time is come*. So thou art to know, that the time of favour, the time of deliverance, yea the set time will come. So that this may adde much comfort to the godly, that their afflictions shall be as the horseleeches set to the body, to suck no longer then the corrupt blood is taken away. Thus *Job* though he had many gloomy and sad temptations, yet sometimes again he was refreshed with this, *That he should come out of that affliction, like gold out of the fire*, Chap. 23. 10. How wonderfully was *Habakkuk* comforted in his exercises? for being informed, Chap. 2. 3. *That the vision was for an appointed time*, that God though he did tarry would surely come, see how he breaketh forth, Chap. 3. 17, 18. *Although the fig-tree doth not blossom, &c. yet I will rejoyce in God, I will joy in the God of my salvation*. Well may God be called the *God of consolation*, who can make *Habakkuk* so greatly rejoyce, when all earthly props are taken away.

A second *Scripture-cordial*, by which God comforts his people in all tribulations, is from *Christ*, with all the fulness that is in him. Certainly *Christ* received by faith, and improved Evangelically, is able to make us gather grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles: He that hath this Sunne cannot be in the dark night: What makes *Paul*, Rom. 8. so triumph and boast in all manner of tribulations, challenging (as it were) every one of them to do their worse? Is not the foundation of all this, *Christ dead, and Christ risen again*? And if he hath given us *Christ*, how shall he not with him give us all things? Thus the presence of *Christ*, the spiritual influence of *Christ* into the soul, taketh away the bitterness of all troubles. Thus it was with the *Martyrs*: Thus it is with Gods children, while by faith they lay hold on *Christ*. As the light of the Sunne puts out the light of the fire: Thus the presence of *Christ*, putteth out all other comforts, yea and all troubles also. Hence *Isa. 9.* *Christ* is promised to the godly by way of comfort to them, when the outward condition of the Nation was like to be very miserable. *Micah* also Chap. 5. 5. promiseth, that *Christ* should be the peace, when the *Assyrian* should come into the Land. But what Peace was *Christ*, he did not bring temporal peace, neither was he to have a temporal Kingdom? But to the godly, who looked for a spiritual *Messiah*, this was the comfort of comforts, to have a *Christ* as a spiritual Saviour. If then thy tribulations be heavy, and irksome; Oh desire more knowledge and enjoyment of *Christ*, for he will be in stead of all things to thee; he is Wisdome, he is Righteousnesse, he is wealth, he is honours, he is husband, friend: So that he who hath fellowship and communion with *Christ*, finds him to be, as those three *Worthies* cast into the fiery fornace, having the company of one, who is said to be in form like the Sunne



*Sonne of God*; a defence against the rage of the fire, so that the very garments did not so much as smell of any burning. Thus the presence of Christ hath so wonderfully ravished and refreshed the heart of an afflicted Saint, that he hath almost forgot his affliction, and discovereth not the least soil from it.

3. *Another Scripture discovery for comfort, is to presse and command the life of faith upon Gods promise.* So that whatsoever the principles of the world and sense do suggest, yet faith rectifieth all: That finds honey to come out of a dead Lion; that can suck honey from a bitter herb, when fleshly wisdom, and humane reason can go no further, yet even then faith can gather sure and firm arguments of comfort. David in that great distresse at Ziklag, yet is said to encourage himself in his God. Paul maketh this the ground of a Christians magnanimity, support and joy under all tribulations, Heb. 11. 1. *Because faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.* Gods thoughts and our thoughts are wholly different, only faith inableth us to know the mind of God; and where flesh is ready to say, God is casting off, and utterly forsaking, there faith seeth him drawing near. The Disciples in a tempest thought they had seen a Spirit, and were affrighted, but it was Christ. The promise of God and faith applying it, do bear up the soul, and make it rejoyce in troubles. Heb. 6. 18. we have there Gods promise, and Gods oath also to confirm it, and therefore faith the Apostle, *We have these two immutable things, that we might have strong consolation.* See there, because of Gods promise, and that confirmed by an Oath: We have a consolation, and a strong consolation; Strong, because the ground of it is strong, Gods Word, so that it is stronger than mountains, it is stronger than Heaven and earth: Every creature shall fall to the ground rather than the promise not be made good to thee. Again, it is a strong consolation, because neither the Devils nor his instruments shall be able to overcome it. Though therefore thy enemies be strong enemies: though thy troubles be strong troubles, yet remember here is a strong consolation; death it self cannot deprive thee of it: if then we walk by faith, and not by sense; if we live upon these breasts of consolation, as the Infant doth, surely we may then swallow down even deadly and poisonous things, yet they shall not do any hurt: Because the promise is the same, thy heart would alwayes be the same, as the Law is written in thy heart in respect of obedience; so let the promise in respect of faith: Faith from the Word doth shew carnal reason, all the mistakes and false principles it proceedeth upon, discovering light in darknesse, love in afflictions, and life even in death it self.

Lastly, (For these bunches of grapes may serve to acquaint you what the Land is) eternal glory to be possessed after the troubles, vexations and exercises here, is able to make the heart to be exceeding glad under all our troubles. Thus the Apostle 2 Cor. 4. 16, 17. *We faint not, for this light affliction worketh for us a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; and this is by looking not on the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen.* At another time the godly are commanded to lift up their heads when the day of judgment draweth nigh, because their redemption is at hand. And 1 Thess. 4. 18. after a discourse of our Lords coming, and that the godly shall be ever with him, they are enjoined, *To comfort one another with these things; that incomprehensible glory which is provided for us to receive after our sufferings here, makes the heart rejoyce, while it is in the valley of tears; this Haven after our storms; this rest after our troubles; this Crown after our warfare, is that which reviveth the soul, and makes it a Naomi, while it is a Marah.*





## S E R M. XL.

*How God may be said to comfort his children in all their Tribulations, though many of them may live very disconsolate.*

2 COR. I. 4.

*Who comforteth us in all our tribulation.*

**W**E were discussing this third particular in the Text, but that one main doubt may present it self, the discussing whereof is very usefull in a practical way. It is this, *Seeing Paul speaketh thus generally, God comforteth us in all our tribulations, doth not this necessarily infer, that all the children of God in all straits are full of comfort? And if this be so, either we must condemn many, who in all appearance are the dear children of God, for hypocrites and unsound, because they have no comfort: Yea all divine means have been used, and yet they cannot be comforted, or else we must question the truth of this Scripture. This Text saith, God comforteth his in all their tribulations: Experience telleth us, That many of Gods children are sadly disconsolate, or else if their want of comfort be an argument, they do not belong to God, we shall then passe an uncharitable censure upon those who are every way to be accounted of as precious Saints, and that of the first magnitude.*

Let us therefore remove this stumbling block out of the way. And

How God  
comforteth  
his children  
in all their  
tribulations,  
though they  
often may be  
disconsolate.

First, *It cannot be denied, but that it may be the case, not only of a godly person, but even an whole Church, to be without all comfort, that nothing but sorrow and trouble do even devour them all the day long. See this true in Jeremiahs Lamentations, Chap. 1. 2. Chap. 2. 20, 21. The Church there sits in mourning, with tears on her cheeks, and she hath none to comfort her, neither God or man. And for a particular person, what is clearer than Job, whose soul was as full of spiritual botches and sores by sad thoughts, as his body was of corporal ones, Job 17. 13. When I said my bed shall comfort, thou scarest me with dreams, &c. Job not in his bed a place of rest, nor in the night a time of rest, can be freed from terrors and fears: yea Chap. 9. 27. when he said, I will leave off my heaviness, I will comfort myself; when he set himself with all holy endeavours to cast off this viper of sorrow, yet they did rather increase upon him: Yea, when he himself cannot remove those mountains of his heart, it may be his godly friends may, and indeed such spiritual Physicians God doth sometimes blesse for that end: But Chap. 21. 34. he telleth them, They comfort him in vain; none then can deny, but there was a time at least, when God did not comfort Job in his tribulations. We read also of Heman, Psal. 88. 15, who complaineth, That he was distracted with the terrors of the Lord from his youth up; he complaineth, Gods wrath lay hard upon him; that God did afflict him with all his ways; yea he prayed, he cried, and God did hide his face from him. So that in all the Psalms there is not a word of comfort, no nor of hope or of confidence, which yet David in every Psalm almost, though never so cast down, doth in some degrees and sparks (as it were) discover, but here is nothing but disconsolateness; yet this Heman was a godly man,*



man, a Penman of some *Psalms*; yea he was accounted one of the most eminent wise men that lived in that age; for 1 King. 4. 30, 31. *Solomons* wisdom is said to exceed all others; yea four wise men are intanced, whom *Solomon* did surpass, and this *Heman* was one. Whereas then, we are apt to judge such as want the sense of Gods comfort, and go in a disconsolate manner, fools and melancholly, such as will go out of their wits: You see here a godly man, and one of the wisest men in *Solomons* times, yet afflicted with the terrors of the Lord, and can obtain no comfort. This then being laid down as a foundation, let us consider what is to be said to the doubt. To answer the Objection, you must know in what sense this is a doctrinal truth, *That God comforteth his in all their troubles*, and to that purpose observe these particulars:

1. *That comfort, especially when we are sensibly affected and enlarged therewith, is not of the essence of grace, nor is it absolutely necessary to salvation.* It is indeed for the *benè esse*, and is like oil to the wheels, it doth wonderfully quicken and expedite the soul in wayes of holiness; but yet a man may be in the state of grace, and may have an unquestionable claim to Heaven, yet for all that be destitute of such sensible comfort, for these consolations do commonly flow from assurance of Gods grace, and the sense of his love shed abroad in their hearts. Now it is not this assurance that doth justify us, but it supposeth us justified already; we may rest on Christ, we may believe on him, and yet want this *faith of evidence*, as some call it, while we have the *faith of adherence and dependance*. Seeing therefore that this comfort is not an inseparable quality from a godly man, we must then understand the promises of God for comfort, as we do of other things which are separable from true grace. God promiseth health, outward peace, long life, yea of all outward mercies, godliness hath a promise, but yet the godly do not alwayes partake of these; there are many of them sick, weak, poor and distressed, though under such promises: And the reason is, because these are *not necessary to salvation*: They are not required as Christ and grace is, for then no godly man should be without them; yea they may be an impediment, an hindrance, and therefore it's a mercy sometimes when God denieth them. Thus it is in regard of our comforts, it is for our good to be sometimes without them, God in much mercy suffereth his people to be in darknesse, and to have no light. So that you may no more wonder to see them sometimes without joy, then to see them sometimes without the outward mercies of the world: Yet you must understand, when I thus compare these soul-consolations to bodily ones, that I make them not of the same nature with temporal outward mercies, as if they were no more *spiritual* than wealth, or health are: No, I do not compare them in their nature, but in their property of separability; they neither are of the essence of grace, nor of absolute necessity to salvation, and herein they are alike: otherwise these consolations they are *spiritual* mercies seated in the soul, and have intimate connexion with the graces of Gods Spirit. *Gerson* calls them *Gratia gratis data*, and indeed they are the gifts of Gods Spirit, and are highly to be prized, yet as degrees in grace are of Gods Spirit, but not necessary to salvation; the *truth of grace* is, but not *every degree of grace*, for then no godly man could be saved that is weak in faith, and in other graces. Thus it is with this comfort in some respect, *They are gifts of God*, they are wrought by his Spirit, yet so as that they do not necessarily accompany our salvation, and in this sense you must understand the Doctrine.

2. *There is a two-fold joy, which I may call a direct and reflex one*: The one is when we are carried with delight to that which is holy and good. The other is, when we know and feel that we are thus carried out, joy is a fruit of faith, 1 Pet. 1. 8. *In whom believing ye rejoyce with joy unspeakable.* Now as faith acteth two wayes, so also doth joy. Faith acteth *directly* by going directly to Christ; and then faith acts *reflexly*, by looking upon this, that I do rest on Christ. Thus there is a joy that doth directly go to God and Christ by way of delight and enlargement,

Comfort not absolutely necessary to salvation.

There is a two-fold joy, direct and reflex.



ment, being thus apprehended by faith. Of such a joy in holy things *Solomon* speaketh *Prov. 21. 15*. The Prophet *Isaiah* also *Chap. 64. 5*. And then there is a joy flowing from the apprehension of this, that we do delight in holy things. For a man may rejoyce to find he can rejoyce in what is good; a man may be comforted in finding that Christ and heavenly objects, are matter of delight to him. Now as it is with those two acts of *faith*, the former, which is the *direct* one, that is absolutely necessary, by that we are justified, by that Christ is made ours, by that we are in him, and he in us; but the latter is not of the same necessity. It is nowhere said, If ye know that ye do believe, and if ye be assured that ye do believe, but if ye do believe, then ye shall be saved. It would be sad with many of Gods children, if none were justified, but he that knoweth he believeth. Thus it is also for joy, joy in its direct acts, it's a necessary grace. It is our duty to rejoyce in God and heavenly things, as well as love them. And indeed there cannot be any grace of love, but there is also the grace of joy. Hence *Gal. 5*. joy is made the fruit of the Spirit, with other graces. And *Rom. 14*. The Kingdom of Heaven is said to consist in righteousness, and in joy in the holy Ghost. So that there is a joy, which being a grace, is part of the new creature, and there cannot be godliness without it; as is our love, so is our joy. But then there is joy as a privilege, which (as you heard) ariseth from the knowledge of our being in the state of grace, and this is communicable at Gods pleasure. Those that have the most of Gods grace, may for a time have the least of it in sense, as we see in Christ himself. So that we are to distinguish between joy as a grace, and joy as a privilege. It's of the latter the Doctrine is to be understood.

Joy is either  
spiritual, or  
sensitive and  
corporeal.

3. Yet further, The joy that Gods people partake of, may be considered either as seated in the soul, or as in the sensitive part. The one is rational and spiritual: The other is sensitive and corporeal. For the *Scotists* they say, That as there are affections seated in the sensitive part, which are called fear, joy, grief, &c. so they make some things answerable to these in the ministerial substances. For, it may seem, the soul when separated from the body doth love joy, yea and Angels themselves, not that they are to be called passions in them, because not corporeal, but they are so in us. Now this distinction is made great use of by *Casuits*. There is (say they) a rational love, and a sensible love. A godly man may sometimes feel a more sensible love of his children, then he doth of God, yet he is not to be discouraged, or to think he doth not love God better than his children. For according to his rational love, which consists in the esteeming and prizing of Christ; so he would part with all these when God calleth, rather than deny his cause. Indeed a learned Writer rejects this distinction of love intensive and apprehensive, (*Cocceius de fœdere*) because we are bound to love God (saith he) with all sensible affection, as well as rational esteem; but no doubt the distinction well explained is of great use. It is made use of also in regard of sorrow for sin: Some tender hearts complain, they can shed tears, they can sensibly weep and mourn for the losse of a father or a child, but they cannot do thus about their sins. Here again we succour them, saying, There is the passion of sorrow which stirreth bodily, and the grace of sorrow which affects the mind and the will. Thou dost detest and hate sinne, thou judgest any evil to be suffered rather than that committed; thou hast an unspeakable displicency and dislike of what thou hast done, here is godly sorrow, though it be not passionately expressed in thee; therefore repentance is called *metanoia*, because of the great change upon the mind. Thus it is also of great use in the matter of joy. There may be a rational solid joy, arising through faith, whereby the soul will enjoy a peaceable tranquillity and serenity, when yet no bodily affectionate joy may much be perceived. The Heathen could say, *Gaudium est res severa*.

Lastly, We are to distinguish in this Objection concerning the matter of thy joy. Although God hath denied thee outward arguments of joy; thou hast no health



no friends, no outward supports to rejoyce in, yet thou hast the favour of God, and his precious promises that are heavenly ravishment to thee. When *Paul* and the other Apostles, were in dangers often, in troubles often, yet at that time their hearts were replenished with spiritual consolation. Hast thou therefore no comfort, because thou wantest such outward ones as thy heart desireth? Let not soul-consolations seem small to thee, though with *Lazarus* thy condition be so straitned, that thou canst not get so much as a crum of bread. Again, distinguish of the degrees of thy comfort: There is *lesse comfort* and *more comfort*, yet *comfort*; there is a greater and lesser flame of fire, yet both fire still. Thus though *comfort*, even the least, be like fire in the bosome warming of the heart, yet it is capable of intension: Sometimes comfort overfloweth, and like the Sunne dispelleth every cloud away. Sometimes again comfort is there but in a combat, in an agony, conflicting with fears and sorrows. Now wilt thou call that only comfort, which drieth up every tear, which removeth every sigh. No, you must not expect perfect comfort any more than perfect faith, perfect love. The Devil and sinne doth not only oppose thy graces, but thy comforts: Therefore bless God, and be thankfull for a drop of comfort, though thou hast not as much as thou desirest. Oh consider, how justly God might make thee a *Cain*, fearing every thing should kill and damn thee! How justly may he make thee a *Margor Missabib*, fear round about thee, and all fear within thee? Thus God might make thee a terrour to thy self, should he deal with thee according to thy sins. So that you must not only account great comfort, comfort, but even be thankful for more sparing dispensations of it.

Lastly, *Distinguish about the time of comfort*. What though sometimes thy soul seemeth to be like a wilderness full of howling beasts; what though in some tribulations, thou criest out with *David*, *Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious?* Yet this Sunne afterwards breaketh through the clouds, so that thou canst say with *David*, *Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning*. And *Psal. 126. 5. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy*. You must know that God hath seasons of joy. As there is a time to reap, and a time to sow, so saith *Solomon*. *There is a time to laugh, and a time to mourn*. *Job* had indeed been a long while without the comforts of God, but at last you read all was abundantly made up again. We must not therefore judge of comfort by one time, or by one tribulation, but compare all together: as in matter of grace, the godly are not to judge of their estate absolutely by some particular temptation, for then they might passe false judgement upon their selves.

5. To clear this truth yet more, *Consider of Gods tender and offer of comfort*. But it may be thy heart is froward and unbelieving, rejecting the *consolations* of God. For although we say, *God comforteth his in all tribulation*, yet that must be understood so as that his people do their duty. God comforteth the godly afflicted, but it is the godly believing, the godly preparing and setting himself to receive comfort; he must not be as *Rachel* that refused to be comforted, as God speaks once or twice to us in his Word, for such or such a duty; but if we refuse to hear, if we attend not, we go on in rebellion, yet God offers sanctifying grace to us: Thus it is also for comfort; God comforts again and again by his Word; by his Ordinances he often suggests, precious and sweet arguments of joy to thy soul, but thou art peevish, dejected, and so they are not received: as we cannot write on wet paper, neither will the moistened strings of the instrument make any melodious sound: If therefore thou hast not comfort in thy troubles, mayest not thou blame thy self? If every *Israelite* had not *manna* in the wilderness he may condemn himself; God did rain enough, but his negligence slighted the getting of it.





## S E R M. XLI.

*The Works of Gods Spirit upon his People, are not only for their good, but likewise for the Advantage of others.*

2 C O R. I. 4.

*That we may be able to comfort them who are in any trouble, &c.*

**T**He next particular to be considered of in this text, as it stands divided, is the *final Cause* of Gods comforting his people, especially those that are in any office in the Church; which is, *That we may be able to comfort others.*

So that in this latter part, we are to consider the *final Cause* it self, which is, *To be able to comfort others.* *Nihil dat quod non habet*, is the old Rule. They have no skill or ability to comfort others, who have not the experience and feeling of this upon their own souls. It is not enough for the Ministers of the Gospel to have devoured many Books of learning, to be able to decide Polemical questions in Divinity, to convince gainfayers, to be Doctors Angelical, subtle or profound; to be *Mallei Hereticorum*, *The hammers of Hereticks*; unlesse also they have the experimental works of Gods Spirit upon their own souls. They are not able to apply themselves to the hearts of others. Paul had not been able to comfort others, if the Lord had not practically acquainted him with heavenly consolations.

2. There is the *Subject*, to whom, or the Persons, whose wounds Paul (like a good Samaritan) is desirous to pour oyl into; and that is, *Them which are in any trouble.*

3. There is the *manner how*, which is, by that very comfort Paul himself found. And

Lastly, There is the *fontal and original Cause* of this, *Whereby we our selves are comforted of God.*

The *final Cause* will afford two Observations;

Gods spiritual works upon his people, are not only for their own, but for others spiritual advantage.

First, *That the heavenly and spiritual works which God vouchsafeth to his people, are not for themselves only, but for the advantage and edification of others.*

Who would not think that the inward comforts, and soul-consolations, should not be wholly inclosed within our own breasts, that these should not be communicated to others? Who would not say of these, as Solomon in another case, *Prov. 5. Let these fountains be only thine own, and not strangers with thee?* Yet God giveth us these soul-comforts, that we may be able to revive and comfort many sad troubled hearts, which lie languishing for want of them.

The



The second Observation is, *That those have the greatest ability and fittesse to help the souls of others, who have had the experience and work of God upon their own souls.*

First, Let us consider the former Doctrine, viz. *That those great and spiritual works which God vouchsafeth to his children, are not for their own good only, but for the good of others.* If he said in a political sense, *Nemo sibi vivit sed patria*, it is much more true of a Christian, *Non sibi vivit sed Ecclesia*: He liveth not to himself, but to the Church of God. Hence is that frequent comparison in the Scripture, of the Church of God, and a body together; making all Christians so many several Members, that if one rejoyce, all must rejoyce with it.

To be thoroughly possessed of this truth, we are first to know, *That there are two kinds of Gifts of Gods Spirit unto those of the Church.* The Ancient Schoolmen, which distinction is still retained with the Papists, is, that there are *Gratie gratis datae*, Favours freely given; which are bestowed, not so much for the good of them that have them, as of the good of others. Such were those extraordinary gifts of Gods Spirit in the primitive times, to work Miracles, to speak with tongues, &c. And such are also those common gifts of Prayer and Preaching, which many may have, and yet they be never the more holy. But as water-pots, that conveighs water to the Garden, making it fruitfull, while it self beareth no flowers at all; so are they. And truly, this is sadly to be considered by all the Ministers of the Gospel, whether the gifts God giveth them, be not for the good of others more then their own. As the Nurses of young Princes live upon excellent food, not for their own sake, but to give more excellent nourishment to their young ones.

The other sort of gifts they call *Gratie gratum facientes*, such gifts, as he that hath them, must needs be accepted of with God. And these they make faith and love, with the like graces. Now this distinction is absurd, for the Members are confounded: The graces making acceptable, are graces freely given. It is solely and wholly of the grace of God, to make thee differ from others in the special work of sanctification, as it was in the primitive times, to make one who had miraculous gifts to differ from another. And then it is false, for no grace we have, doth of it self make us *gratos* accepted of to God; but it is in and through Christ, that their imperfections are pardoned, and so received.

Therefore our Divines do distinguish better: That there are *Dona Ministrantia*, and *Dona sanctificantia*; Gifts of service, and Gifts of sanctification. Gifts of service are such which God giveth for the use of the Church, Gifts sanctifying, are such as are for the good of those that have them.

Now though this be true, yet in the second place, you must not limit this so straightly, as that sanctifying gifts may not be serviceable gifts also. For, it's plain, that in all the people of God, their very graces as well as their gifts, are to be exercised for the good of others: Thy repentance, thy faith, thy joy, may be put forth to quicken and edifie others. Therefore we say in the Doctrine, *All the spiritual works of God upon the souls of his people, are not only for themselves, but for others.* All, not only gifts, but graces: Not only their parts and their duties, but their holinesse also. Hence (Prov. 15.4.) an wholesome tongue, which is the gift only that a godly man hath, is said to be a tree of life, because it doth so much spiritual good to others. Think then, that God hath not given thee grace and comfort for thy self only, but for others who may stand in need of thee. As it was with Christ the Head, so it should be with his Members proportionably. Isa. 50.4. *To have the tongue of the learned given them from God, to be able to speak a word in season to him that is weary.* As therefore God hath given thee fullnesse temporally, to feed the hungry,

Of the distinction of the Schoolmen of spiritual Gifts.  
1. *Gratie gratis datae.*

2. *Gratie gratum facientes.*

The Gifts of Gods Spirit are better distinguished into *Dona Ministrantia*, and *Sanctificantia*.



hungry, and to cloathe the naked, when such due objects of charity are presented to thee. Thus also God giveth thee faith, to help him that complaineth he cannot believe: He giveth thee comfort, to succour those that can find no joy. This is to be considered, that thou beest not a fountain sealed up, but opened, whereat many may occasionally refresh themselves.

Gifts are en-  
creased by  
being impro-  
ved.

Thirdly, *The godly mans improving his gifts and graces, doth not at all hinder and diminish his own, but thereby increaseth and multiplyeth them.* It is like the widows giving of oyl to the Prophet, which was so farre from impoverishing, that it did enrich her. We may not then refuse those who shall desire help for their souls; as the wise Virgins did the foolish, saying, *It might be there would not be enough for themselves.* No: the more thou art willing to season others with thy own salt; to quicken and comfort others, by thy own quicknings and comforts, herein thou wilt find thy self more edified, and the good will rebound upon thy own self. For these improvings of thy gifts and graces serviceably to others souls, will multiply thy own two waies.

First, *God hath promised, that to him which hath, that is, which useth and exerciseth his talent, more shall be given.* The more these breasts give suck, the more will milk abound. Thou maiest therefore look upon Gods promise, and expect that while thou art warning others, spiritual heat will be increased in thy own self. And

Secondly, *The exercising of graces, doth inwardly corroborate and strengthen the principle of grace.* The more thou puttest forth thy graces to stirre up others, the more delight and joy wilt thou find in using of them. Therefore be as the Olive-tree, and the Fig-tree of thy fatnesse and sweetnesse, enlivening and cherishing of others who stand in need of thee.

What are  
those choice  
things, where-  
in more parti-  
cularly we are  
to be service-  
able to others.  
1. Humiliation.

These things promised, let us consider some of the choice Particulars, where-  
in we may not only bring good to our own souls, but to others also.

First, *That spiritual humiliation and brokennesse of heart which thou hast found, may be very powerfull to perswade others of the bitterness of sinne.* Say with meltings of thy soul to them, Oh, if thou hadst known, if thou hadst ever felt what God hath made me feel, what wonderfull changes would be in thee immediately! Those finnes which are honey, would presently be as gall. Thus it was with David, Psal. 51. when he could recover from his broken bones, when he could enjoy the face of God, which was hid from him; *Then I will teach transgressors thy waies.* Then his heart could not hold any longer. He that had found how bitter a thing it was to provoke God by sinne, would perswade others also of it. Thus Christ he bids Peter, when he was converted, to confirm his Brother: To use his own experience to help him. So that you see, even the very sorrow and grief God hath put thee into, let it be a reall Sermon to others. Our Saviour made it an aggravation of the Jews wickednesse, that if one should rise from the dead; they would not believe. And certainly, if others will not believe thee, who art (as it were) come out of hell, who hast been in the depths of Gods displeasure, their hearts must needs be much hardned. Oh then, make use of what God hath made thee feel, to be a furtherance to others! As Paul, *Knowing the terrour of the Lord, we perswade men,* 2 Cor. 5. 11. He knew the terrour of the Lord experimentally, when he was stricken to the ground in a Vision, and found the power of God so wonderfully upon him, in making of him another man.

2. The Know-  
ledge of God,  
and true faith.

Secondly, *The knowledge and true faith which God hath given thee, do thou make use of it to direct and preserve others.* This knowledge and sound mind in Religion, is not indeed essentially accompanied with holinesse: A man may be very Orthodox, be sound in the Faith, as Hymeneus and Phileas were a while, yet afterwards made shipwrack of all. But yet it is a special gift of Gods Spirit to be led into the truth; and although to have a sound mind only be



be not enough to godliness; yet godliness cannot be without a sound mind, in some measure or other. Every godly man is built upon the true foundation, though there may be some hay and stubble, which, though it shall not damn him, because not fundamental heresies, yet shall make his salvation the more difficult: *He shall be saved, so as by fire.* If then God hath preserved thee in the truth, and that in times when many fall on thy right hand, and on thy left hand, having this soul plague and infection upon them, let it be thy greater care to reduce such: Let them have thy light, thy helps, and knowledge: Put thy light upon the candlestick, and not under a bushel. Consider that place, *James 5. 19, 20.* *If any do erre from the truth, and one convert him, let him know he shall save a soul from death.* So that you see the salvation or damnation of another, is interested in thy improving of sound knowledge: to inform such. Howsoever the Apostle *Rom. 14.* in a particular case about things indifferent, adviseth, saying, *Hast thou faith? have it to thyself:* Yet take heed of doing so in fundamental and essential truths of God: *Do not there have faith to thyself, but endeavour that all may be seasoned with the same sound knowledge.* Even a private Christian, though he is not to usurpe the Office of a Teacher, yet he hath his proper sphere, wherein he may move to propagate the true knowledge of Christ. This knowledge then is a talent, and expect that God will have an account of the improving of it. Say, as of comfort in the text, so of sound knowledge and truth, *The Spirit of God hath directed us into the truth, that we may also be able to guide others.*

Thirdly, *Those temptations and assaults which the children of God have, are not only for themselves, but for others also:* That they may be able to direct and guide others, groaning under the like temptations. It is true, God worketh a great good for his own people by these fiery darts of Satan. *2 Cor. 12.* Paul had those buffetings of Satan, *that he might not be puffed up with those wonderfull revelations he enjoyed.* There is no such way to keep the gracious soul humble and lowly in his own self, as these affrights from the devil: Even as vizors and such horrid representations scare children, and make them runne home to their Parents; so also do these buffetings of Satan, and tumults raised by him, drive us out of our selves; make us highly to prize Christ and his righteousness: Yea, though these temptations be very yerkome and intolerable in themselves, yet commonly none are such choice, spiritual, and eminent Christians as those who have been in these combates. As dung, though noisome in it self, yet it maketh the field fruitfull, and full of beauty; thus do these temptations of Satan to a godly heart. But yet this is not all; By these the Lord intends them to be admirably usefull to others. Alas how many poor afflicted souls, especially new beginners, new Converts, have their trembling hearts sugg'd to them, Who was ever tempted as thou art? Can any be the Son of God, and have such horrid and vile injections in his soul as thou hast? What is this but the beginning of hell in thee? Is not damnation already begun upon thee? Now for a troubled soul in these whirlepooles, to meet with such who are able to say, They have been thus, and thus; these are no new temptations, but what hath usually befallen the godly: Is not such an one called out by God, to pour oyl into such wounds? Doth not God plainly speak, *Therefore hast thou been buffeted, tempted, and exercised, that such bruised and wounded souls may receive comfort from thee?* Hence it is that Christ himself would be tempted, *that he might be able to succour those that are tempted,* Heb. 2. 18. Thus by our temptations we are not only to learn many things, but also to teach others. (But of this more in the second Doctrine.)

Lastly, Here are *Consolations:* And although these are of greater concernment in the particular to every Believer, because the joy of the Lord is his strength, hereby also he walketh thankfully and fruitfully; yet let him take heed of being

3. Temptations.

4. Consolations.



ing narrow and sparing in using them for others comforts. For if thou art a Minister of the Gospel, then thy work is not only to convert, but to comfort; not only to bring out of sinnes, but out of fears and dejections. Thus the Apostle at the last verse in this Chapter, *We are helpers of your joy.* Consider that not only what is acquired by study, but what also is inspired by God into thy soul, may be of admirable efficacy to others. Though Christs Sermons and Parables were like a two-edged sword, mightily dividing between true grace and hypocrisie, yet (*Isa. 50.4.*) he expresseth his Ministry by this, to *speake a word in season to the weary*: and this he calleth *the tongue of the learned*. We call it Learning, to alledge the Ancients, to be full of *Greek and Hebrew*, to empty out the bowels of School-learning: yea, some are so simple, as to account studied words, and composed language, rare Learning; whereas speech is like the Arrow, that is not commended for studs of gold, or Jewels on it, but if it hit the mark. Thus that is Oratory which is most proper to effect the end of our speech: To make the sinners weep, the hard heart to tremble, and the sad to be comforted. You see it's *the tongue of the learned* to do this. Dost then God give thee comfort? be not thou wanting then to support and comfort the feeble-minded. It may be thou art a kind of a *spiritual Dives*, full of consolations, and thinkest thou hast store enough laid up for thee, both to live and die with, take heed lest some poor *Lazarus* would be glad of thy crums, and thou dost not give to him.



## SERM. XLII.

*That those only can make fit applications of Spiritual things to others, who have an Experimental knowledge of them in their own souls.*

2 COR. I. 4.

*That we may be able to comfort those that are in any trouble.*

**T**Here remaineth a second Doctrine contained in the final cause, why God comforts his people, viz. *That they may be able to comfort others.* From whence there is this Observation obvious:

Those only can make fit applications to others, who have the work of Gods Spirit upon their own souls. A two-fold knowledge of spiritual things  
1. Speculative and Theoretical.

*That those only are able to make fit applications to the souls of others, who have had the experimental working of Gods grace upon their own souls.*

*That we might be able*, implying, otherwise there would not be that sufficiency and fitness in us which ought to be.

To discover this, consider,

First, That there is a two-fold knowledge of divine and spiritual things: The one is speculative, and meerly Theoretical, when we know them, yea and it may be give a sound and firm assent to them: And such are all those learned men who are very Orthodox, and wonderfully able to maintain the truths of Christ against all opposers whatsoever. Such as these are, God raiseth up many times



times as eminent Pillars in the Church. But because this is not enough to salvation; therefore in the second place, there is a *saving, affectionate, practical and experimental knowing of truth*, whereby we do not only believe such things, but by believing we do love and embrace the truths we know: We do *credendo amare*, we have a *faith which worketh by love*. Now it must be confessed, that the condition of those who are only Orthodox, and no more, is much to be pitied and lamented: To write against *Arminians* and others, about the work of Gods grace in Conversion, and yet never *experimentally* to have this upon their own souls: So to treat of Justification, and Christ, yet not at all to have the saving and sweet operations of these things upon their souls, is greatly to be bewailed: To be like the builders of *Noah's Ark*, that proved a place of rest and refuge in the time of the deluge for others, when they themselves had no advantage by it. But it is no wonder that such excellent knowledge, and of such admirable lovely use in the Church, be not saving, while it goeth no further; because practice and doing is the end of all *Theological* knowledge. *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them*, Joh. 13. 17. So that this *experimental and practical knowledge* of divine things, is that which compleateth the former. To know Christ, so as to have him; to know regeneration, so as to be born again; this is the glory of all knowledge. Hence is that Commandment, (2 Cor. 13. 5.) *To examine our selves, to try our selves, whether we be in the faith, and in Christ or no*. The latter word signifieth, *to make an experience, or an experimental tryal* of grace in us. So that if you had a man who could speak like an Oracle in all the points of Divinity, who was a very Miracle in respect of learning, yet he is but a *tinckling cymbal*, and speaks in the matters of Religion like a Parrot, not rightly or fully apprehending of them, till he hath inwardly tasted of the sweetness of them.

Secondly, *This saving experimental knowledge doth differ in its whole kind, and is of another nature in a moral consideration, from a meer Orthodox, or bare speculative knowledge*. I shall not enter into a large dispute concerning the difference between illumination in a temporary believer, (although now we are not so much speaking of the *habitus fidei*, as *Theologie*, which may be in learned knowing men) and that which is in a true convert: We shall suppose it for a truth from Heb. 6. *That those who were enlightened, yea and had some experimental workings, (of which anon) yet they had not* *τε εροδία τ' ουτως*, they had not the things that hold fast salvation; and therefore the Apostle hoped for better things. They therefore so differ, that take a man who doth only know divine things by Books, by Sermons, by reading of Authours, and was not at all acquainted with the Spirits effectual teaching by the Word; and let him at last come to have these things set home upon him by an effectual demonstration of Gods Spirit; let him know these things *as the truth is in Jesus*, which the Apostle mentioneth Eph. 4. and he will then cry out, acknowledging that he never knew any thing till then: That he was in the dark; that he had but a learned kind of folly; that he spoke of these things, as men do of Countries which they see in Maps, only by a general knowledge, having never travelled to see the Countries themselves. There is such a fuller power accompanying this *practical knowledge*, that the former was but a shadow to this substance. Observe many men, Do they not read the Scripture? Do not they go from Chapter to Chapter? But till it be the ingrafted Word in them, they have the images and pictures of things, not the things themselves.

In the third place, *That is not to be called experimental knowledge, which may be accompanied with some kind of sensible affections*. Mat. 13. the temporary believer received the Word with joy. You see then, that some may have joy, and that from the Word, yet this not be the true saving knowledge or faith. Heb. 6. some are there also said, not only to be enlightened, but to have

2. Practical and experimental.

This speculative and practical knowledge of spiritual things differ in the whole kind.

All knowledge that is accompanied with some kind of affections, is not an experimental knowledge.



have *tasted the good word of God*. Here you may observe, that some may tast, may have joy; all which do inferre some affectionate inward experimental workings on the soul, and yet not attain to have the true and honest heart: And the reason is, because these affectionate workings, they are but transitory, they quickly vanish away: There is no settled constancy or permanency in them. So that we are not to give credit to all the affections, nor to all enlargements that we may find in our selves, even about holy things, but we are to be sure that there be deep rooting enough. Hence

All experimental workings upon the soul, are to be tried by the Scriptures.

Fourthly, *All experimental workings of the soul, are to be judged and tried by the Scripture*. Our hearts being full of guile and imposture, the devil also *transforming himself into an Angel of light*, hence it may come about that we may have the experience of much joy, of many enlargements, and yet all the while be in the devils waies. Hence it is that all Sectaries almost, will tell us of the great support and comfort they have had, and that ever since they embraced those new waies; yea, some make themselves to be the only spiritual men, that all other are in the flesh: as *Tertullian* wrote a Book against the Orthodox, stiling it *Contra Psachicos*, as those that were meerly natural, in the meantime he pretended to private revelations. The experiences therefore which we find in our souls, we must examine and try, lest we make that to be of God, which is indeed of the devil. No doubt many deluded souls, in dangerous and damnable waies, comfort others of the same way with them, by that comfort wherewith they are comforted, not of God, but of the devil. Therefore let our experiences, especially of comfort, be judged by the Word, in these Particulars.

How our experiences are to be judged by the Word.

1. Are they from Scripture rightly understood?

First, In the manner and way how thou comest by them, *Are they by the Scriptures truly understood?* (I say, truly understood:) For, if thou abusest Scripture, putting thy own sense upon it, and thereby receiving comfort, it is no longer then *Verbum Dei*, but *verbum tuum*; thou wrestest it, and makest it thy own, or the devils, and not Gods. If therefore thy experience of comfort be grounded on the Word, if thy consolation flow from hence, then this will abide, *That we through comfort of the Scriptures might have hope*, Rom. 15.4. The Spirit of God doth first lead into all truth, and then into all comfort.

2. Are they from the Spirit of God?

Secondly, *In the original, and the efficient cause; is it from God, from the Spirit of God?* Or from the devil, who may harden thy heart, and make thee have such joy as mad men have, not feeling their own misery? The comfort and the joy that is truly so, is still attributed to God and the Holy Ghost, as the fountains thereof.

3. Do they make thee more holy and humble?

Thirdly, *Doth thy experience of Consolation make thee more humble and empty?* Doth it drive thee out of all thy vain carnal confidences? This argueth it cometh from God, if with the *Centurian*, when Christ cometh to thy soul, thou sayest, Lord, I am unworthy this joy, this consolation should enter into me. And therefore the more comfort, the more lowly and debased in thy own eyes: And never more, then when the most joy. This is a good experience of comfort, as coming from God. So also, if this comfort be *conducting to holiness*, if by this thou art more quickned to mortifie sinne, to subdue the corruptions that remain; if this be like oyl to the wheelles, thou art more fervent, more zealous in all holy duties, then make much of this comfort, for it cometh from Heaven. If then we have the experience of Gods working upon our souls, both in the way of grace, and the way of comfort, then, and never till then, are we fitted to deal with the souls of others. And there are these Reasons:

Reasons confirming the Doctrine.

1. They that have not this experimental knowledge, they have no skill to cure others.

First, *None can wisely be a Physician to heal a disease in another, unless he have skill and understanding in the nature of it, and the fit remedy for it*. Now while a man hath no experimental knowledge of Gods workings upon his own soul,



soul, he hath no skill, no heavenly heart about the diseases in others souls. Bring a poor wounded soul that is burdned with sinne, that would be directed into *Evangelical* comforts, to a *Pharisaical*, self-righteous Doctor, and alas, he will, as *Ely* thought the poor weeping woman, bitter in soul, and praying to God, to be drunk; so will these think such an one mad and foolish. Hence (you heard) Christ would be tempted as we are, *that he might succour those that are tempted; that he might have the tongue of the learned, to speak to such who are weary.* Those that have not been thus humbled, thus exercised, thus comforted, they are no waies able to be any helpfull comforters, but like the Priest and the Levite, will passe by those who are thus wounded.

Secondly, As such can have no skill or understanding, so they cannot have any *sutable*nesse of pity and compassion to those that are so afflicted in spirit, and needed comfort. She said, *Non ignara mali miseris*, &c. The experience she had of miseries, made her pity those that were in the like. God would have the *Jews* be kind to strangers, *because they had once been strangers themselves.* Thou that hast been in the deep waters of Gods wrath, thou that knowest how insupportable it is, to feel the frowns and wrath of God for sin, with what melting bowels, with what pittifull affections wilt thou be, like the good Samaritan? Hence it is, that as the Lord Christ himself did conflict with the wrath of God, being in unspeakable agonies, so also many of the choicest servants of God, especially Ministers, have been under the harrow and hammer of these desertions, that they may be more polished for Gods building. *Luther* doth manifest in several places, what the great works of God were that he felt on himself, so that though of a stout and undaunted spirit, yet the anger of God did beat him to powder; and finding no help for his afflicted soul in any Popish Principles, no more then the Dove could place of abode, while the waters did overflow, at last, when it pleased God to comfort him by *Evangelical* comforts, through a right understanding of Christ and righteousness, what a tree of life did his tongue become to others? How many did he comfort, by those comforts God had comforted him? *Calvin* also, it's noted of him, that he was a man of deep and retired thoughts within, yet did retain them much in his own brest; and no doubt, by this he was the more prepared to be an excellent Instrument in the Church of God. We see then, he only, that hath the *experimental*s, either of the bitterness of sinne, or the sweetness of the Gospel, is only able, with a tender heart and hand, to cure a wounded soul. And certainly, if the Apostle make this an Argument, *Gal. 6. 1.* to rejoynt (as it were) one that is overtaken in a fault, because the most spiritual may be tempted, how much rather when thou hast been tempted? So that this experimental way in holy things, worketh much commiseration, and sympathizing with those who groan under the hand of God upon them. When *Judas* was in that perplexed agony, crying out, *I have sinned, in betraying the innocent blood;* with what stony and feared hearts did the Pharisees reject him, saying, *What is that to us, look thou to that?* It's a mercy for broken-hearted sinners, to fall into the hands of a tender experienced Believer, who hath felt what they feel, and so is able to conceive of their sad estate. And indeed, even as for instruction of the ignorant, there needeth much patience, so there doth also pity, which will put thee upon unwearied diligence to comfort the dejected. For, it is not a work soon done, they must bear with many infirmities; they are full of subtle objections; and when they are for a while comforted, they loose all presently again: infomuch that he must have tender bowels, who is not wearied out with their weaknesses.

2. They can have any sutablenesse of pity and compassion.



3. Because such  
only are found  
reall and in  
earnest.

Thirdly, Such experienced ones are only able to deal with tempted soules, to instruct and comfort them, *because the afflicted find such only reall.* Such are in earnest: He that hath experimentally felt the bitterneſſe of ſinne, maketh it manifeſt to others, that it's not meer Oratory or Eloquence, that ſets him againſt ſinne, but ſomething within, that he feeleth burning like fire within. The very Heathen could ſay, *Si vis me flere dolendum eſt primo tibi.* A man that hath not inwardly felt the power of truth upon his heart, he is ſo cold, ſo formall, ſo lazy, that you cannot tell whether he believeth the things he preacheth to be true, or no. And ſo alſo for comfort, muſt it not much ſatiſſie the dejected ſoul to meet with one under the ſame temptations, under the ſame fears, and yet now prayeth with joy, heareth with joy? Thou canſt find all thy heart (as it were) in him, and yet he is delivered, he is comforted, who thought it as impoſſible as I do: Whereas if a man be a ſtranger to theſe workings of God, the tempted ſoul flyeth off, ſaying, He knoweth not how to judge of theſe things; I can give no credit to him.

4. Because ſuch  
alone are faith-  
full.

Fourthly, Such are only able, *because they alone are faithfull.* They dare not flatter them; they dare not ſooth them: They will give them no comfort, if there be no cauſe for it. Now the truly broken ſoul, loveth this faithfull dealing better then flattery. There is a woe to thoſe *that made the heart of thoſe merry, whom God would have made ſad.* And there are many in the miniſterial Office, that are unworthy, and flattering in this caſe, comforting ev'ry one that lyeth a dying, though never ſo prophane. Now he that is truly humbled, careth not for ſuch a mans comfort, he knoweth he will not deal faithfully; he will ſend me to hell with comfort. And whereas it is one rule, that experienced Divines give to tempted ſoules, That *under their fears and doubts, they muſt believe the judgment of the Miniſters of God about their condition, rather then themſelves;* this muſt be underſtood of ſound, faithfull, and experienced Miniſters; otherwiſe, it is a moſt dreadful thing to fall into the hands of fawning, flattering Miniſters, who will encourage them, and ſend them to Heaven, when they themſelves know not either what true ſorrow for ſinne, or true Evangelical comfort meaneth.

Uſe 1. Of Exhortation to the Miniſters of Gods Word, *not to think learning, ſtudy, reading of Books, enough to qualifie thee for a Miniſterial employment, but implore much the work of Gods Spirit herein.* A good heart, a gracious heart, will help as well as good Books. Do not reſt only upon ſtudied and acquired gifts, but pray alſo for infused and inſpired.

Uſe 2. Of Inſtruction to the people of God, *How uſefull it is to communicate their gracious experiences one to another;* much edification, much conſolation may come hereby. Whoſe ſadneſſe haſt thou comforted? Whoſe deadneſſe haſt thou quickned? It may be thou haſt learned a precious receit how to cure ſuch a ſinne, ſuch a temptation, and why doeſt thou not help others?





# SERM. XLIII.

*It is a special Duty incumbent upon every one both Minister and Christian, to apply comforts to the Afflicted in a right manner.*

2 COR. I. 4.

*That we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble.*

**I**N this final cause, we considered the *Subject*, who are fit for this *comfort*, and they are said to be *such who are in any trouble*. Those that abound in mercies need no comfort; we are not to give honey to such full stomachs. But the troubled, the afflicted, these are they, whose condition we are to commiserate. From whence observe,

*That it is a special duty, in a right manner, to comfort those that are in trouble.*

It is a special duty, in a right manner, to comfort the afflicted.

We are not only to seek the conversion of such who go astray, but also to regard the consolation of those that lack it. Hence *Lam. 1.* the Church complaineth, *That she had none to comfort her*. The Apostle speaketh of this duty often, *1 Thess. 4. 18. Comfort one another with these things. 1 Thess. 5. 11, 14. Comfort the feeble minded*. You see by this pressing this duty so often, that we are seriously and diligently to practise it, lest as God will judge for neglect of corporal alms to fit objects of charity, so also he will call to account for the not dispensing of these spiritual alms. Thou hast not visited those, who were spiritually imprisoned by the guilt of their sins; neither fed those with the bread from Heaven who were hungry. Hence it is that the Apostle speaking concerning the incestuous person, who was now deeply humbled for his sinne, *2 Cor. 2. 7.* exhorts them to *comfort him, lest he be swallowed up with too much sorrow*. We have a notable instance for this in *Jobs* friends, *Job 2. 11.* who when they heard of all the evil that was come upon him, they made an appointment together to come and mourn with him, and to comfort him. Thus you see that it is a special duty, we are carefully to discharge, to refresh the souls of others who are cast down; That as the custom was among the *Jews*, and *Solomon* he giveth a precept about it, *Prov. 31. 6, 7. Give wine unto those that are of an heavy heart, that he may drink, and remember his misery no more*. So we are in a spiritual consideration to give the wine of the Gospel to such as mourn for their sins.

To discover this truth, Consider

First, *The troubled* (as you heard formerly) *are of two sorts; Those who are afflicted in soul*, as the *incestuous person*, whom sorrow had almost swallowed up as a whirlpool. These that call for a drop of water (as it were) to cool their scorching souls, and cannot have it. To such as these we are to apply

Propositions clearing the truth.

1. There are two sorts of troubles.

1. Spiritual and inward.



our selves with all tendernesse to comfort them, as the Apostle exhorted the *Corinthians*. For seeing that a wounded spirit is more hardly born, than any outward misery whatsoever; no wonder that in this case if ever, we come with all comforting medicines to heal them and revive them. We read the Lord Christ, when he was in those agonies, conflicting with the sense of Gods wrath, that even he himself had an *Angel* to comfort him. Must *Christ the Sonne of God* have an *Angel* sent to comfort him? How much more then a poor wretched sinner, ready to fall into hell with the burden of his sins? This is fully represented by *Elihu*, Job 33. 28. where speaking of a man chastened by the Lord, and consuming away, so that he doth even abhor to eat his bread, *If there come an Interpreter, a Messenger, one amongst a thousand, that can shew to such his uprightness, that make it evident to him that he is no hypocrite, but the truth of grace abideth in him, then his flesh shall be fresh as a childs, he shall pray to God, and he will be favourable, and he shall see his face with joy.* See what a wonderfull change such a messenger may make, he doth even raise him from the dead, he that was pining away is returned to his youth, and this is for spiritual troubles.

## 2. Outward.

Again, in the second place, *There are outward troubles*; and it's our duty to comfort such also, and endeavour to turn their water into wine; and of such troubles happily the Apostle speaketh chiefly in this Text. For although God be ready to fill their hearts with joy, yet he will have this done many times by the help of others, because we being members in the same body, are to be accordingly serviceable to one another.

## 2. The afflicted need the help of others to comfort them, though themselves be never so skilfull in the comforting others.

Hence in the second place, *Every one in trouble doth greatly need the assistance and help of others to comfort them.* Take the most godly Minister, or the most able Christian, who have been most eminent and successfull to comfort others, yet when they have been tempted and cast down themselves, they have not bin able to make use of those directions they have given to others. As *Physicians*, though never so able to help others, yet in their own diseases, they need the advice of others: Inasmuch that there is no Christian in any trouble can say, I need not the comfort of any, the help of any, I can support and comfort my self well enough. Thus *Paul*, Rom. 1. 12. though so eminent an Apostle caught up into the third Heaven, yet he did long to see the *Romans*, *That he might be comforted with them*, though that might be in respect of their graces, to see this flourish, as in other places, *Ye are my Crown and my Joy, if you stand fast in the Lord.* But howsoever we see *Job*, though so eminent, yet not able to pour oyl into his own wounds, he is without comfort, and cannot help himself.

Now there are these Reasons, *Why those who are afflicted, though never so able and gracious, yea excellently skilfull to comfort others, yet they themselves need help from others in their temptations:*

## Reasons.

## 1. Because temptations darken the judgement.

First, *Because their temptations do darken and obnubilate their own judgements, and so they are not able to see that ground, and those arguments of comfort, which others may.* It is with them, as those who would behold their face in a broken glass, or in muddied streams; like those that look through a green glass, they judge every thing green; while judgement is kept clear, though faith be weak, yet still there is some support; but then is the soul wholly cast down, when the eye is become darkness, when in stead of a Father it apprehends God a Judge; when instead of beholding the gracious works of Gods Spirit in themselves, they think they see nothing but hypocrisie and rottenness in themselves. Oh now how welcome is such an one of a thousand, who shew to that man his uprightness!

## 2. Because the sense of their grief doth wholly possesse them.

Secondly, *The most eminent in their troubles need comfort from others, Because the sense and feeling of their grief doth wholly possesse them, so that they mind nothing else.* Whatsoever it be that is a burden upon them, with this they rise, and



and go to bed, and groan under it; now another Christian is very fit to put them in mind of such promises, to remember them of such passages in Scripture, which their immoderate sorrow had wholly driven out of their mind. The soul of a man cannot be intent to many things at once; therefore the sense and feeling of its particular exercise taketh up the whole heart, as if there were no Scripture, no promise, no balm in Gilead; for any then to be a Remembrancer, a Monitor; you forget such a place, you remember not what the Scripture delivereth concerning your condition, or you do not think of what you have formerly. Say with David, *I will remember the works of the Lord of old.* Thus (I say) even the most eminent are so apt to be sensible of what is upon them, that they remember not such things as may do them good.

Thirdly, Even the most eminent, *who are in any trouble, they cannot so bear it, but they are subject to unbelief, to discontent, to frowardnesse, to many sad exercises of soul.* And therefore no wonder, if they need the help of others to allay that evil spirit in them, as Martha said, *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died:* So mayest thou say, Oh if such a Christian, such a Minister had been with me, I had not been so impatient, I had not been so dejected! We cannot be in exercises, especially in spiritual desertions, and the sense of Gods wrath; but withall there will arise much sinne, there will be froth and mud that our hearts will send forth. In this boiling of the soul there will arise some scumme. It is true in Christ, although he was under those disconsolate desertions destitute of comfort, yet all the while there was no sinne in him, no grace was weakned, though his comfort was abated, his soul was like a glass with pure water in it, all the moving and tossing of it up and down, could not cause any filth or mud in it; but it is otherwise with us, our souls have mud, a finfull sediment in the bottome, and no sooner are we tossed and moved up and down, but this cometh to the top, our corruption sheweth it self presently; and therefore we need the prayers, the advice of others, yea rebuke sometimes, because like Rachel, *We refuse to be comforted.*

Fourthly, Every one needeth comfort from others in trouble, *Because the Devil is then most forward and busie;* He is ready to accuse God to thee, and to accuse thee to God; He moveth in Job's wife, that *he should curse God and die.* He is the Prince of darknesse; and a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour; and those that are afflicted they are almost in his jaws: The room is almost ready swept and garnished for him: How many in their troubles hath he prevailed upon to despair, to self-murder, to destroy themselves? Thus he is watching at his advantage, to provoke thee in thy troubles, to impatience, to discontent, and from these to rage and fretting against God, and from these to final despair: Shall then the Devil be thus busie to assault a poor soul? and wilt thou not be as diligent to recover him?

Lastly, *Though God be the God of all comfort, and so he can if he please comfort without any Paul's, any Ministers, or Christians, yet he hath appointed their service as a means by which he will comfort us.* It might be thought a vain thing, to send for Minister or Christians to comfort, seeing it is God onely that can do this; but you must know, God will do it by his instituted means. Whereas therefore it is the Devils great temptation to keep off such afflicted ones from coming to the publick Ordinances, from Prayer, from revealing and manifesting their temptations, to those that are holy and wise: Let such troubled souls know, that this is the way to throw themselves irrecoverably into the Devils mouth; and therefore though God will comfort; yet it must be in the use of the means appointed by the Ministry, by Prayer, by Conference: Therefore though thou com-

3. Because the most eminent, when in troubles, are subject to much unbelief and frowardness.

4. Because the Devil is then most busie.

Lastly, God hath appointed Ministers and Christians as a means to comfort others.



complaineſt, thou dareſt not pray, thou dareſt not come to the Ordinances, for then thy temptations are moſt violent and fiery, yet give not them over, for in and through theſe God will at laſt communicate comfort to thee; *God is the God of comfort through the inſtituted and appointed means of comfort.* Indeed if by an abſolute neceſſity thou art deprived of all means of comfort from others, as many of the *Martyrs* have been, then thou mayeſt expect immediate conſolations from God, and that he will be in ſtead of all Miniſters, and godly friends to thee. And ſo much for the ſecond general head.

2. The diſpenſation of comfort to the afflicted, is either *Charitative* or *Poteſtative*.

In the third place, *The diſpenſation of comfort to thoſe that are in trouble*, is of two ſorts, *Charitative* and *Poteſtative*. *Charitative* is that which every Chriſtian in the way of love is bound to do to another. When the Apoſtle commanded the *Thiſſalonians*, to comfort one another, he ſpeaketh to them as private Chriſtians. *Poteſtative* is that whereby the Miniſters of the Goſpel, who are in Power and Office, do adminiſter conſolation to others. And as the Miniſter in Office hath a peculiar promiſe from God in the diſcharge of his Office; ſo may the private Chriſtian expect a greater ſucceſs in his labours, when faithfully diſcharged: For the Office is not enough, unleſs it be diſpenſed in Gods way. Hence to them is given the Keyes or Power to bind and looſe, with this addition, that what they do ſhall be ratified, that is, as they ſay, *Clave non errante*, provided that they bind or looſe in a Scripture-way. The Miniſter then of the Goſpel is by his Office to comfort as well as to terrifie, to looſe as well as to bind; not that he doth theſe things authoritatively, but miniſterially and declaratively only, yet ſo that in the declaration of this, a ſpecial ſucceſs may be expected from God. Hence *James* 5. 14, 15. *Thoſe who are ſick*, are commanded to call for the *Elders* to pray for them; and in that is included all other duties requiſite to the ſaving of that ſick mans ſoul. Yea ſome have been ſo greatly diſconſolate, and tempted by Satan, that learned and pious Divines have thought it convenient, to give a particular abſolution, and private application of the Goſpel to ſuch an humbled ſinner, and that in a miniſterial way, as in the name of Chriſt.

4. What is required to the comforting others in a right manner:  
1. Knowledge of the temptation and diſpoſition of the perſon.

Fourthly, We ſay in the Doctrine, *That it's a duty in a right manner to adminiſter comfort to ſuch as are in trouble.* Now that right manner comprehends very much, for an unſeaſonable and unwiſe, or unſeaſonable comfort, doth deſtroy rather than do good; even as Phyſick unſeaſonably given. To a right manner, there is required:

1. *A ſkill and knowledge of the temptation, as alſo the diſpoſition of him who is thus exerciſed.* To be a Phyſician of ſouls requireth admirable prudence and wiſdome above what is in the matter of the body. Every temptation is not cured by every comfort, neither is every exerciſed man the ſame he appeareth to be; he may be an hypocrite, he may live in known ſinnes to himſelf, yet ſecret to others; and if comfort be given to every one that complaineth, this will be to give pearl to ſwine. *Job's* friends, though wiſe and godly, did miſtake in the nature of *Job's* affliction, thinking it was for ſome extraordinary ſinne, or his hypocrifie in the wayes of God, whereas it was for the trial of his graces: They alſo miſtook about his perſon, condemning him for an hypocrite, when yet he was full of integrity. Thus you ſee we may miſtake on the right hand, and on the left.

2. The diſcovery of ſin, and then the application of comfort.

2. *The right way of comforting lieth in taking the Scripture-way, and that is by diſcovering ſinne, and ſearching to the very bottome, and then to give comfort; as you do in wounds, go to the bottome before you heal.* The Scriptures do ſadly complain of thoſe Priests that daubed with untempered mortar, that



that cryed Peace when there was none; and no doubt many Ministers shall answer for their applying of false comforts, as well as teaching false Doctrines. Every sick man looketh that the Minister should only comfort him; if he speak of sinnes and damnations, he is counted cruel, and one that will drive men to despair. But content your selves, we must not, we dare not comfort, but in the Scripture-way; and that is to such only as do mourn for their sinnes, and that upon true grounds. For every *Pharaoh* and *Ahab* can humble themselves, while the hand of God is upon them, and they think they shall die; but these are not the mourners that God would have comforted; thou must bewail thy sinnes from spiritual principles and heavenly motives, such as will hold in thy health, as well as in thy sickness. This then is the soul of this Doctrine, *It's a duty to comfort those who are in a trouble, but in a wise, faithfull Scripture-way.* Otherwise those damned souls thrown into hell, will to all eternity curse those Ministers that cryed *Peace, peace* to them: Oh that ye had cryed *hell, hell, damnation, damnation* to us; that might have done us more good!



## S E R M, XLIV.

*That the same Grounds of Comfort, which revive the Hearts of one Godly man, may do the same likewise to another.*

2 COR. I. 4.

*By the comfort wherewith we our selves are comforted of God.*

**W**E shall at this time finish the Text. For whereas two things remain in the Division, *The Manner*, how the Apostles do comfort others, and that is, *By the comfort wherewith they themselves are comforted.* And the *Formal Cause* of all, who is said to be God. Of this later, we have said enough already. We shall therefore at this time dispatch the former. *That comfort by which the Apostles themselves were refreshed, by that did they revive others, even those that were farre inferiour to them both in gifts and graces.* So that as by the same Sunne both the rich and the poor do see; one finds the sweetness of the light as well as the other. Thus also by the same grounds of comfort, that any godly man may be supported, all may be. Observe,

*That those grounds of comfort which revive the heart of one godly man may also do another.*

That which is wine to make glad the heart of *Paul*, will also exhilarate the hearts of others, who believe in *Christ*. That which is honey to one cannot be gall to another.

The same grounds of comfort that revive the heart of one godly man, may do so to another too.

This



1. There are both general and particular grounds of comfort.

What are the general grounds of comfort.

1. All afflictions come from a Father.

2. The end is good.

This truth hath its great practical use. And

First, Let us consider, *That there are general grounds of comfort for all the godly in all their tribulations, and there are special particular ones.* The general grounds of comfort are such, that all the godly may make use of at all times, be they Jew or Gentile, bond or free, eye or foot in the body of Christ, there is no difference, no exemption, this fountain is set open. Neither is it like the pool of Bethesda, wherein the first only that stepped in could be healed, for here all are invited to drink, first and last, and that abundantly. There are *Catholicon* comforts, that let our diseases be what they will be, these are proper to cure us. There are some promises so full of general comfort for every condition, that they are made for the *meridian* of every godly man.

Let us give you some summary draught of them: As

1. *That all afflictions do come from the love of a Father to such as believe.* So that although they be grievous to flesh and blood, and have a bitter taste, yet they come from a sweet root. These thorns do grow upon a vine. These bitter streams come from a sweet fountain. Now this ground of comfort belongs to all that have an unfeigned love to God. Canst thou make out thy evidence of being in Christ? Is thy name to be found in the book of life? Then this comfort thou mayest apply to thy self; be thy condition or quality what it can be, thou mayest boldly take this cordial, and it is as proper for thee, as a *David* or *Paul*, any of those who are pillars in godliness. *Heb. 12. 6. For whom he loveth, he chasteneth.* So that you see here is such an argument of comfort, that every member of the body of Christ may use.

2. Another general ground of comfort, is, *The end and fruit of afflictions.* As they come from Gods love, so they are to subdue sinne, to bring us nearer to God. Hence afflictions are compared to the fire that purgeth away the dross, to winnowing that driveth away the chaff; to pruning that cuts off the luxuriant branches, and makes the other branches more fruitfull. They are given by Christ the wise Physician of our souls as heavenly physick, and admirable remedies to crucifie to sinne, and to quicken to righteousness. If God denieth thee such outward comforts thou desirest, know that this very denial is for thy good; and darest thou say, Lord, let me have them, though they damn me; Let me not be afflicted, though it will do me good, *Quid obis vel profit, novit medicus, non egrotus.* Thus the Apostle *Rom. 8. All things shall work together for the good of those who love God.* The Apostle also speakech notably of these afflictions in respect of the issue of them, as well as of the original whence they flow, *Heb. 12. 9, 10, 11.* where a three-fold advantage is said to come by them:

1. *By yeelding to the Father of Spirits chastising us, we live.* Tribulations therefore are the way to make us live spiritually here, and eternally hereafter. If it were not for afflictions thou mightst die and be damned; They have prevented much sinne; They have been like a file to the iron to get off the rust; They have been like the plowing and harrowing of the ground to fit thee to bring forth fruit. And

2. God is said to *chastise us for our profit*, which is expressed to be, *That we might be partakers of holinesse.* Tribulations then are very profitable and advantageous things, though flesh and blood can hardly say so. It may be thy afflictions have done thee more good, than all the mercies thou ever hadst. And therefore under every exercise, examine, What profit have I got? Wherein am I made more holy? And then

3. At the 11<sup>th</sup> verse, after the grievous and burdensome way of them for the present, *afterwards they will yeeld a peaceable fruit of righteousness.* The chastening doth but seem grievous, and that for the present, but afterwards,



it makes more holy, which is said to be the *peaceable fruit of it*. The soul that raged and fretted, finding the benefit, begins then in a peaceable quiet manner to blesse and praise God for it. This is a *General comfort*. Every godly man may say, this belongs to me in my afflictions, as well as to any other.

3. Not to be too large here, *The benefits and heavenly advantages, which come from Christ, being ours*, these also are comforts in common. There is no fiery sword to keep out of this Paradise. Rom. 8. Doth not the Apostle conclude those great priviledges of Justification, of Perseverance in that state, of conquest over all spiritual enemies, and that from such general grounds, as all the people of God may claim to it, Because *Christ died*, and because *Christ is risen*; because he hath given us *Christ*, and how then not with him all things else? Is there any believer so weak, so contemptible, that Christ did not die for, and rise for? Is there any to whom the Father hath not given Christ? If so, you see, that what comforted *Paul* may comfort you. It is a vain Position of Papists, that *Paul* speaketh so assuredly in that condition, because of an extraordinary revelation that he had, that Christ was his; for he grounds his perswasion upon those general arguments which belong to every godly man. Christ then, and his presence, with all his benefits, is a cordial to every believer. This Sunne of Righteousnesse ariseth with healing in his wings to the least believer; as well as the greatest: The Dwarf as well as the Gyant may hold this pearle in his hand. But

3. The advantages that come from Christ.

In the second place, besides such general comforts, which are (as some say of *Manna*) answering all dainties, and was to every mans palate, that which he most delighted in: There are special and particular comforts for special and particular temptations. So that as every disease needeth a peculiar remedy, so every temptation a proper comfort: And therefore that special comfort will not serve one in his temptation, which doth another in a different one. And hence it is, that it is an art of arts, and much heavenly wisdom is required, to administer the proper comfort for such a grief. This makes *Casnistical Divinity*, which is applied wholly to rectifie and comfort a wounded conscience, more difficult than *Polemical* is. The afflicted soul hath its *badn*, its *deeps*; and Satan also in their temptations hath his *deeps* likewise: Insomuch that it is choice prudence to give the proper cordial, and to find out the true way of comforting such, yet though there be special comforts in special cases, yet all the godly that are in like temptations, may, and ought to take the like comforts. That which hath done any godly man good under such an exercise, may do thee also good, if thou art not froward and unbelieving.

Of the special and particular grounds of comfort.

In the next place, let us consider, Why those arguments which some godly men have found powerfull to comfort them, should also be very conducive to others. And

The grounds of the point.

First, *Because all the Godly they are* (as I may so say) *Ejusdem speciei*. They have all the same substantiall fundementall worke of grace in their hearts. That as you see all men have the same specifical *humane Nature*, though there be many individual properties, and differences. Thus all the godly do partake of the same *Divine Nature*; They are all borne of God; they are all become new creatures. Although indeed for the manner of conversion, and the degrees of grace; as also experiences of Gods favour and love in these things, there may be

1. Because all godly men are of the same nature.



much variation, yet in the main, as they all have the image of God, and so are like him: So they are also like one another. It's the common faith; it's the common love; it's the common Image of God, which they all doe partake of. So that godly men, though they may differ in their gifts, in degrees of graces, in their judgements and opinions, yet because the Image of God is stamp'd on them all, there is a likenesse and similitude between one another: What one feeleth, the other feeleth: How one is affected, the other is affected; they understand one another; they do (as it were) see themselves in one another. We have an expression, *Prov. 27. 19. As face answereth face in water, so the heart of man to man.* There is a two-fold exposition of this place, and that contrary. Some say, it is brought to shew the falshood and deceitfulness of mans heart. That as in water, there is not a true representation of the face, so one mans heart is not truly known to another. Others they goe on the contrary, As (say they) the face of a man, and the reflexion of it in the water are alike; so is the heart of man to man, that is of one friend to another. Therefore a friend is *Alter Ego*: They have all things common, one soul (as it were) and one heart. Now if this be true of moral friendship, that their hearts are so alike, how much more of the people of God, who are all made *one in the Lord*, *1 Cor. 12. 13.* They are all but one Person; their hearts must needs answer one another. Let a godly man read *David's Psalmes*, wherein he doth experimentally declare what the workings of his soul were: will not a godly man say, he speaketh his heart, his doubts, his complaints? Seeing then there is the same fundamental work of grace in all, no wonder if what is suitable to one, is also to another.

2. Because all have the same spirit.

Secondly, Another ground of the Doctrine is, *From the samenesse and identity of that Spirit of God, which enliveneth all, and worketh in all.* For as it is with the body, though it hath different parts, yet all those are informed and animated by the same soul. It is not one soul that informeth the arms, another the feet, but it's one and the same soul that informeth all. Thus it is also with all the people of God, they may differ much in externals, their condition, their estate; yea in internals also, in illumination and sanctification, yet it is the same Spirit of God, that liveth and worketh in them all. If therefore the same root give nourishment to all of them, they all grow upon the same stock; if the same spirit diffuse it self through all, no wonder if what comforts one may also comfort another; no wonder if the same promises revive one that doth another. He said, *Homo sum, & nihil humani alienum, &c.* He was a man, and so nothing of a man was strange to him. Thus thou art a believer, a new creature, and so nothing that is proper to such, should be strange to thee.

If you say, Seeing they are all animated by the same Spirit, which is a Comforter, then it would follow, they are all comforted alike, all have joy alike, but experience confuteth that: Two have the Spirit of God, and one is comforted, the other is dejected, walking in darknesse; so that you would say, certainly the same Spirit is not in both.

The answer is, Though the Spirit of God, which is a Comforter be in all the godly, yet it is a free agent, he dispenceth this voluntarily as he pleaseth. And again, Though the Spirit of God in the godly encline to comfort, yet it is in an ordered and appointed way. If thou art unbelieving, froward, then thou resistest the Spirit of God within thee. The Jewes have a Proverb, *Super maestum non cadit Spiritus Sanctus*, which in a good sense may be true. As it is in matter of Doctrine, so it is al-



so in respect of Consolation. All the godly have the same Spirit, whose work it is to lead into truth; yet what wonderfull differences in judgement may be amongst them that have the same Spirit, yet they all hold the foundation, because the Spirit of God doth communicate it self by degrees, and in measure, to one more, to another lesse. Thus it is also in respect of Consolation; though they have the same Spirit of comfort, yet the out-goings of this, are in one more than the other. And why should it seem a strange thing, for all the godly under the Gospel to have the same Spirit, seeing the holy ones under the Old Testament, and those under the New are led by the same Spirit? Whatsoever Marcionites of old, and Socinians of late say to the contrary, as appeareth notably, 2 Cor. 4. 13. *We having the same Spirit of faith, as it is written, I believe, and therefore have spoken, we also believe, and therefore speak, so we also believe, and therefore rejoyce.*

Thirdly, Another ground of the Doctrine is, *Because the main arguments of comfort promised in the Word, are not upon personal considerations, neither are particular priviledges, but from that common reason which belongs to every believer.* Paul is comforted, not because Paul, not because an Apostle. So David findeth God putting gladnesse into his heart, not because a King, not because a Prophet, but because godly. If therefore comforts (Fundamental, I mean) are given upon a publick interest, which belongs to all the godly, then it followeth, what comforts one, may, and should comfort another. The Scripture which was spoken peculiarly to Joshua, Paul applieth, (Heb. 13.) to every true believer: Christ is a Christ equally to one believer, as well as another. The godly cannot strive about Christ, as those women before Solomon about a childe, one said, It was mine; and the other, It is mine; one cannot say, It is my Christ, and not thine; but Christ is every believers, and yet not divided.

3. Because promises are made alike to all.

Let the Use be of Direction to the godly, in their application of comforts, not to observe personal considerations so much. To say a Paul may take comfort, a David may, but shall such an one as I? This is to improprie where God hath made common.





## SERM. XLV.

*The true and unfeigned owning of Christ, is al-  
waies accompanied with some, sometimes with  
great Afflictions.*

2 COR. 1. 5.

*For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth  
by Christ.*

**T**He Apostle doth still amplifie that necessary and special truth, viz. of  
Gods comforting those who are in trouble. For the troubles which do  
constantly follow the waies of Christ, are a great stumbling block  
and offence to many. If therefore this be received as a fundamental maxime,  
Christ's Consolations are more then our sufferings, then we shall no longer be a-  
fraid, but see that the Lyon is killed, and we may find honey in him.

In the text therefore, the Apostle is illustrating this precious Doctrine, shew-  
ing, that God doth not only comfort, but he comforteth proportionably. If great  
afflictions, if overflowing afflictions, then great comforts, and overflowing  
comforts. So that in the words we may observe two Propositions, first abso-  
lutely considered, and then secondly comparatively.

The first Proposition absolute, is, *That the sufferings of Christ abound  
in us.*

The second, *That our Consolation aboundeth by Christ.* Christ is the cause  
of our afflictions, and Christ is the cause of our joy.

Thirdly, The Comparison lyeth in the terms of similitude and proportion,  
*As our sufferings abound, so our consolation also aboundeth.*

The sufferings  
of Christ a-  
bound in us.

Let us consider the first Proposition absolutely, *The sufferings of Christ a-  
bound in us.* The sufferings of Christ, *παιδιματα Χριστου*. The word *παιδιματα*,  
is sometimes used for the afflictions of sinne, as Rom. 7. 5. Gal. 5. 24. And in-  
deed these were *παιδιματα* to Paul in another sense, for he suffered and groan-  
ed under them: But here in the text, and in many other places, it's applied  
to afflictions and sufferings. This is of various acception, for sometimes it  
may be taken *subjectively*, for those sufferings which Christ himself indured.  
For though he was without sinne, yet being our Surety, he suffered for that;  
yea, he suffered every way, God and man: so that his sufferings were more  
dreadfull then the sufferings of all men put together. In these sufferings is  
contained the treasure of all our peace and joy, of which the Scripture speak-  
eth abundantly and fully: But with this our text doth not meddle.

What is meant  
by the suffer-  
ings of Christ.

Therefore in the next place, *The sufferings of Christ* may be understood  
indeed of *those he is affected with*: but yet it is in his Members, not in his own  
Person. This is a very comfortable truth, that the sufferings of a godly man  
for Christs Cause, Christ accounts them as his sufferings; he taketh it as done  
to himself. Thus Christ, though glorified in Heaven, saith, *Saul, Saul,  
why persecutest thou me?* Act. 9. 4, 5. Christ is imprisoned, Christ is buffeted,

Christ



Christ is reproached, and mocked in them. As it is comfortable to the godly, so it is as terrible to all those who trouble and revile the godly for Christs sake, as too many do, though they think with *Pilate*, to wash their hands, and say, they are innocent. I mean the carnal and prophane ones of the world, whose rage, if God did not restrain, would be as that *Haman* to the whole Nation of the Jews, not leave one alive. But this is not chiefly meant here, though this be not to be excluded.

2. The sufferings of Christ may be understood *exemplarily*, by way of conformity to Christ; That we suffer as he suffered. In which particular, *Rom. 8.* we are said to be conformed unto his Image. *1 Pet. 4. 13.* we are commanded to rejoyce, when we are partakers of Christs sufferings: That is, when we have a communion and fellowship with him. For if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him. This is part of the meaning. But then

3. That which is the principal and chiefest meaning of the phrase, is, to understand it *causally*, those sufferings we indure because of Christ: For owning his way, for continuance in his Discipleship. For the way of Christ being contrary to the course of the world, hence it is, that they are stirred up as so many hornets: They are the Serpents seed, and are of their Father the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning; and therefore if the godly will cleave to Christ, they must expect no mercy from the world.

The second thing in the Proposition, is the attribute *abounds*: It is not only *adiuvata* in the plural number, but also *spiritus*. *Chrysostome* understands it *comparatively* to Christ, as if the meaning were, We suffer more than Christ. Christ indeed, said of his Disciples, they should do greater works and miracles than he did, but it is impossible they should suffer more than he did. For, his death was not only a *Martyrdom*, but a *Propitiation*, being a *Sacrifice offered up for the finnes of many*. The word then only sheweth, That the Sons of God may not only suffer, but their sufferings may abound, may overflow; so that both in number and weight, they may greatly exceed.

What is meant by the sufferings of Christ abounding.

Lastly, In the Proposition, it is *in nomine*, not *in*, as in the reddition it followeth, which may be thought emphatical; although it is usuall so to change Prepositions and Cases, *in* for *in*.

What be these sufferings abounding in us.

The words thus explained, Observe,

That a true and faithfull owning of Christ and his way, is accompanied with sufferings; yea, sometimes overflowing and excessive sufferings.

The true and faithfull owning of Christ, is sometimes accompanied with great sufferings.

The Apostle takes it here for granted; supposeth it as a received truth, that Christs way, and sufferings, are always together: As the Sun and shadow; as the Rose and prickles. So that what was said of Christ, is true also of every Member; It behoved him to suffer, and so enter into glory. *Christianus* is *Crucianus*, said *Luther* of old. I only add: in the Doctrine, A true and unfeigned receiving of Christ: For, if so be we take only some truths, and some parts of Christs way, and leave those which most enrage and trouble the world; if we take his Doctrine, and not his Discipline, his truth, and not his godly order, the world is lesse moved. So if of his truths, we take some that are more speculative, and leave the rest which are more practical and searching; if we go no further, we may have some good entertainment in the world. *Si dimidio Christo essetis contenti facile transigeremus omnia*, said *Calvin* on a particular occasion. Or, again, If men take up the whole profession of Christ, but upon politick and carnal ends, to hold Christ and his advantages, to be not *Christi*, but *Christum*, as *Marion* said, such will not be put to suffering. As the great heathenish Pleader *Symmachus* for *Romans* Idolatry, to the



the Emperours, when pressed to be a Christian, said, *Fac me Episcopum Romanum & ero Christianus*; *Make me Bishop of Rome, and I will be a Christian*. Thus when men think to serve Christ and Mammon, all this while they will not suffer: Yea, therefore they take up the profession of Christ (it may be) that they may not suffer. As in Mordechai's time, when the Jews had power given to slay their enemies, many became Jews for fear; so they may Christians also. And lastly, If they have not grosse carnal ends, and so be dissembling hypocrites, as *Simon Magus* was, and *Julian* for a while, as some think of him, that he was never conscientiously, but politiquely a Christian, to please his Uncle, and so obtain the Empire at last; yet if they do own Christ in a formal customary general way only, they may escape sufferings: But to follow Christ exactly, powerfully, precisely and singularly, against the fashion of the world; to get the Kingdom of Heaven by violence; to put out his right eye, and to cut off his right hand: he that will be thus a Christian indeed, he shall have sufferings enough; and that not only from the world, but even from such who professe Christ in Name, but deny him in Power. What is more ordinary, then to see a titular and nominal Christian, to hate and abhor a reall, lively and powerfull Christian? and only because he is more strict and forward in the waies of Christ then he is. Thus then you must understand the Doctrine of one; Who is a Christian in Power, as well as in Name; of one who doth not divide Christ, but taketh all of him; of one who is not a flatterer, but a Friend to him: That saith to Christ, as *Ruth to Naomi*, *I will not leave thee, but where thou livest, I will live*. One that accounteth Christ a Pearl, and sells all, parts with all his lusts, his pleasures and advantages, to have Christ. Such an one as this, can no more be free from sufferings in this world, then a Dove be quiet among Hawks, or a Lamb among Wolves.

Propositions  
declaring the  
truth of the  
Doctrine.

1. A Saints  
sufferings may  
be as extensive  
as his com-  
forts.

To understand this, consider,

First, *That the sufferings for Christs sake, are as various and as extensive as any comforts we have, that we may be deprived off*. So that it's a fundamental qualification in every Disciple of Christ, to love him before Father or Mother, yea life it self: For if Christ be not preferred before the dearest comforts we have, one time or other, we shall be endangered to betray Christ, and rather deny him then suffer for him, which is a most dreadfull condition. I mean, it is very terrible to be in the number of those, whose hearts are so glewed to these earthly things, that they cannot suffer for Christ; they cannot part with all, when he calls for it: But the Disciple of Christ, must be prepared to suffer in any thing, and at any time. Sometimes the sufferings are more extream and grievous, sometimes lesse, and more easie. The former is called *πολλὴ ἀδελτος πόνος*, Heb. 10. 32. and 1 Pet. 4. 13. *πίσως*. The greater are, imprisonment, or banishments, or death it self: And commonly, death for Christ, hath not been a meer ordinary death, but accompanied with those torments and exquisite pains, that could be invented. Insomuch, that if you look over all Histories, you cannot find any such terrible and barbarous sufferings, as the people of God have been put upon. And truly, there is no godly man, but he is to have a fundamental qualification for this. There are also lesser sufferings, which though called so comparatively to greater, yet in themselves are very bitter and grievous: Such are reproaches, scoffs, and derisions. Heb. 11. they are called *cruel mockings*. 1 Pet. 4. 14. when he had spoken before of a fiery tryal, then he mentioneth reproaching for Christs sake. *Ismael* is said to persecute *Isaac*, yet the Scripture called that playing with him. It was in scoffs and mocks, that this persecution was; therefore thou art a persecutor by the tongue, as well as the hand, though thou dost not cast in prison: Though thou dost not bring wood, and kindle the fire at the stake, yet thy flouts,



flouts, thy derisions, thy mockings, these are a persecution, and the godly in these suffer for Christ. I shall instance in one thing more, and that is *their Names and Repute*; in this Christians have wonderfully suffered. Christ was traduced for an *Impostor*, for one that had a Devil, and doing the Miracles he did by *Beelzebub the Prince of Devils*; *Paul* was calumniated for a *seditions and turbulent person*; *Athanasius* for an *Adulterer*. These false calumnies put the Ancients upon their Apologeticals, as *Tertullian* and *Athenagoras*. Wicked men do first impose lyes and slanders upon those who fear God, and when they have thus made them odious, then they think they do deserve any punishment. What abominable lyes have the Papists forged and broached about *Luther* and *Calvin*? Yea still experience confirmeth it, that whosoever will live godly, prophane and ungodly persons will divulge a thousand false reports concerning them. And herein they must look to suffer, and not be troubled for it. The Stars are never the lesse glorious, though Astronomers have given ugly names to them; the *Bear*, and the *Draggons* sayl, &c. Thus we see, that he who will be Christs Disciple, must be above riches, honours, liberty, a good Name, yea above life it self; saying to Christ, as they to *David*, *Thou art worth thousand of us*.

Secondly, *Although it is the portion of all the Members of Christ to be sufferers for him, yet at sometime the storm is more terrible then at others. Sometimes we hear the Church complaining, that they were as sheep for the slaughter, killed all the day long: but at other times God gave more respite. Who hath not heard of the ten persecutions? not that there were not farre more then ten, but because they were most general, and commanded by the will of those who then had power. So that suffering times are various, according to Gods dispensation: He maketh the most bitter storm many times to be but short. As in Queen Marias dayes, after which came a long calm, and Halcyon daies. Nubecula est, said Athanasius of his troubles, It is a little storm, it will quickly be over. But although those publique times of suffering be not alwaies, yet it is very hard, if ever, to see one that liveth godly, not to suffer from those that are evil, one way or other. Every Abel will have a Cain, every Isaac, an Ismael. What though you do not suffer from the Pagans or heretiques without, yet how greatly do ye suffer from the prophane and ungodly within? Every prophane man, though he shrowd himself under the name of Christ, yet he is of an Antichristian spirit, if not doctrinally, yet practically, and in deed. Bernard speaking of the bitter times by Paganish persecution, and then of more bitter by heretickall, maketh the third and most bitter of all, to be in the evil and ungodly manners of those who are within the Church. Hen domine (saith he) qui sunt in Ecclesia primi, sunt in persecutione primi. There is then a suffering for Christ, though not to blood; and if every godly man do not thus suffer, let him fear whether he be not a man-pleaser; whether he fear not man more then God; whether therefore he be not applauded as a wise man, as a moderate man, because he is not indeed a zealous godly man against sinne in his place. The very Heathen could say, How is he a good man, who is not troublesome to, and hated by an evil man? Therefore saith our Saviour, Wo be to you, when all men speak well of you, Luk 6. 26. Some observe the connexion the Apostle useth, 1 Pet. 4. 11, 12. for having in the 11 verse exhorted to a faithfull and diligent discharge of those Offices we are betruisted with, presently exhorts to patience about afflictions, because one will necessarily cause the other. So Mat. 10. when Christ giveth his Apostles Commission to preach, he doth withall admonish them of the hatred they shall meet with. Light will be offensive to fore eyes, and salt will make wounds to smart.*

2. At some time their sufferings abound more then others.

3. To suffer for Christ is very grievous to flesh and blood.

Thirdly, *To suffer for Christs sake, is very tedious and grievous to flesh and blood.*



*blood.* It's because of those reproaches, and many times dangers, which accompany the way of Christ, that it is such a stumbling block to many: They like the Crown of Glory well, but they like not the Crown of Thornes. If Christ's way was a broad way; they might have Christ and their honours, Christ and their lusts, Christ and their advantages; then they would be as forward to runne out and meet Christ, as they did from *Jerusalem*, crying *Hosanna* to him. Therefore howsoever men have thousands of pretences to keep off from the way of godlinesse, and the faithfull owning of Christ, they have many wide gates of distinction to go out at, when danger is at hand, yet it is fear of suffering that keepeth most off their duty. They like Christ well, till it cometh to be said, as she did to *Moses*, *Thou art a bloody husband to me*: So Christ will have thy good name, thy estate, thy life; this makes thee prove an Apostate, and turn hypocrite. Oh the gulf of misery, yea sometimes of despair, that this fear of suffering hath put men upon! Therefore afflictions for Christ's sake, are so often called *temptations*, because they will discover whether a man be found for God, or not; whether they love Christ more then the creatures. Oh then, pray to God, that he leave thee not to this snare, to be afraid to suffer for doing what is good! This will prove bitter at the latter end. Do you not see among Officers, how fearfull to punish the drunkard, the Sabbath-breaker? they shall loose their good word; they will do them despite and malice afterwards: Art not thou all this while afraid to suffer for Christ? He that suffers for doing that which is righteous, for punishing offenders, he suffers for Christ; (as is to be shewed.) Remember then, it's better suffering for Christ, which is our Crown and Glory, then suffering in Hell for ever, because thou wouldst not do the will of God.



## S E R M. XLVI.

*The same Doctrine prosecuted, shewing the Object for which Christians are to suffer, if they would suffer for Christ.*

2 COR. I. 5.

*For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, &c.*

**T**HE Doctrine that hath in part been treated on, is, *That a true and faithfull owning of Christ, is accompanied with sufferings and persecutions.* Some Particulars have been given in to clear this: We proceed to adde more; and the first in order shall be, *That although it is very difficult to flesh and blood, to own Christ so farre as to suffer for him, yet the Scripture represents it as a most blessed and glorious thing, howsoever the world judge it reproachfull.* I shall not here enlarge my self about the encouragements to suffer, when Christ calls for it; it is enough at this time, in the general, to inform, That God will not honour every one with persecutions for himself; It is a great expression of his grace and favour. Hence some Confessors, have desired to be Martyrs, but God by his providence preserved them, they have

'Tis a glorious and blessed thing to own Christ in the midst of sufferings.



have been greatly humbled, and dejected under this, as if it were for some special sinne and unworthinesse in them, that God would not in that manner dignify them. These are not words, and meer oratory, the Scripture is clear in proclaiming this for a title of favour, to be a sufferer for Christ. *Act. 5. 41. The Apostles rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for his Name.* That they might have shame and reproach for Christ, this they rejoiced in, as a great matter of honour. Who were they that the Lord should to exalt them? So *Phil. 1. 29. To you it's given, not only to believe, but to suffer.* By this you see, that every one to whom God doth give to believe, he doth not also give to suffer for him. It's a gift then, and where this is bestowed, they ought to rejoyce, and to be exceeding glad. Yea, *1 Pet. 3. 14. They are happy.* And, *1 Pet. 4. 16. Thy are to glorifie God in that behalf.* If we could believe these Scripture truths, so much sinfull fear and pusillanimity in the cause of Christ, might not be charged upon us, as too often it may be; we would not run from a duty accompanied with sufferings, as *Moses* did from the rod turned into a *Serpent*; neither should we with *Simon the Cyrenean*, be compelled to bear the crosse. That is observeable, *1 Pet. 2. 19. If a man suffer for conscience towards God: ἡτο χάρις;* We translate it, this is *thankworthy*. But happily that is not so proper; for, if a man should suffer all the Martyrdomes that have been in his own body, yet God is not to thank him; he hath not suffered more then he ought to do. Neither do I know that the word *χάρις* is used in such a sence. Therefore it's better translated, *This is a favour*; this is grace, if God bring us to suffer for a good conscience towards him. If then thou art to suffer, either verbally, by mocks and slanders, or really, by miseries and persecutions; set the Crown of Glory, to the Crown of Thornes; set the honey, to the gall; set the honour with God, to the reproach amongst men. That which the carnal heart is so afraid of, the Scripture makes matter of joy, and of glorifying God for it.

Secondly, It being therefore so glorious a thing, it is good to inform you, *What it is to suffer for Christ.* For we may be the devils Martyrs, suffer as *offenders*, or as *busybodies*; suffer for heresies, and the works of the flesh, yet perfwade and flatter our selves that we suffer for Christ.

Now to clear this, we must consider what is required *ex parte objecti*, on the behalf of the matter we suffer for. And

2. What is required *ex parte subjecti*; what qualifications ought to be in him who doth suffer for Christ.

And for the Object matter, the Scripture describeth it in these Particulars:

First, *That what a man suffereth for, it must not be for any sinne*, that is justly punishable by the Law: It must not be for our folly and busy meddling in such things wherein we have no call. The Apostle *Peter* (*1 Pet. cap. 3. 15, 16.*) speaketh notably to this; for giving the people of God in that Chapter, great encouragements to suffer, he cometh in with a caution, *They must take heed for what they suffer*: which is laid down positively, and then oppositly. Positively, *as a Christian*; it must be for professing and doing such things as Christ requireth: Let it not be strange fire, but the fire from the Altar. If thou wouldst have comfort, it must be for doing that which as a Christian thou art bound to do. And the opposite to this, is to *suffer as a murderer*, as a *thief*, or which is more general, as a *busybody* in other mens matters: *ἀλλὰ τριτογενήτων*; that is, *one who busily spyeth into, and medleth with those things that he hath no call to*; it's not his Office to deal in. Now this must not be understood, as the world will judge a man a *busybody*. If a Minister, a Magistrate, or any in Office be zealous against sin, and see to the punishing of it, the prophane ones of the world call this an *an hot busy meddling*. So if private Christians cannot bear the impieties they see committed in the places where they live, but do

What it is to suffer for Christ.  
1. *Ex parte Objecti.*

1. It must not be for any sin.



faithfully and boldly admonish and reprove such offenders; and if this doth no good, then they will proceed further, to the Magistrate and Officers to complain of such, that sinne may be punished, God honoured, and publique judgments prevented. If (I say) private Christians be thus stirring (as they ought to be, unlesse they will have other mens sins lie at their doors, and they become thereby very guilty;) then what an out-cry is made? these are factious, troublesome, disquieting fellows. So that to judge who is a *busy-body*, and when a man is guilty of it, you must have recourse to the Scripture, and to found casuistical Divinity, applying the general rules of Scripture to particulars, and not to the common voice and noise of people in the world. That good zealous Prophet for God *Elijah*, who because he burned with fire for God, had a wonderfull reward thereof, to be carried up in a fiery Charriot to Heaven, yet because he would not endure the ungodlinesse of *Ahab* and *Jezebell*, what is said to him? *Thou art the troubler of Israel*. They condemn him for a *busy-body*, whereas indeed *Ahab* by his wickednesse (as the Prophet said) was the *troubler of the Land*. In suffering then for Christ, we see much prudence as well as zeal is required; yet so, as not to regard the censure of the world: For, who ever suffered for Christ, and their persecutors did not represent them so odiously, as that they might seem to deserve it? This is the first thing.

2. It must be for the name of Christ.

Secondly, For the object matter, The Scripture expresseth it another time, *for the Name of Christ*. Mat. 19. 29. *Whosoever shall forsake houses, lands, &c. for my Names sake*. Job. 15. 21. *All these things will they do to you for my Names sake*. What is *Christs name*? not only the Person of Christ himself; but as the *Name of God*, is that whereby God is known, so is the *Name of Christ*. Yea, under this, is comprehended those Doctrines, and that Faith which Christ had delivered to us. The truths of Christ are to be dearer to us then our lives. Hence it was, that Christianity hath amazed the world, with those millions and millions of Martyrs, that have been for the faith of Christ. It was a wicked opinion of the Priscilliarists of old, *That a man might lye, dissemble, and forswear the truths of Christ, bow to Idols, and communicate with heathens in any bodily worship, so as they kept the true faith in their hearts*. But this is directly opposite to Scripture. Rom. 10. 16. *With the heart man believeth, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation*. To *salvation*: So that a man cannot be saved, though he doth in his heart believe, if he do not, when it is *casus confessionis*, a *case of confession*, confesse also with his mouth the same faith. And Rom. 11. 4. The true worshippers of God in *Eliabs* time, are described not only by their inward grace, but externally also, that they did not *bow their knee to Baal*. It is true, there is a difference between profession and confession strictly taken: As *Cyprian*, *M. luit nos Deus confiteri fidem, non profiteri*. To *professe*, is to do it ultionously of our own accord, when we are not called to it; as some of the Martyrs would do, crying out, *Christianus sum, I am a Christian*; for which they were put to death. And this could not be excused in them, unlesse we say, an extraordinary heroical frange of spirit was at that time infused into them by the Holy Ghost. This voluntary profession, when danger is, is not required: Yea, in lesser truths, we are not to *professe* them so, as to disturb the faith of others. So the Apostle, Rom. 14. 22. *Hast thou faith? have it to thyself*. But then, in case of confession, when the glory of God, the good of the Church, and our own salvation requireth it, then we are to confesse the truths of Christ, though we loose all. It is the great glory attributed by *Paul* to Christ, that (1 Tim. 6. 13.) before *Pontius Pilate*, he witnessed a good confession. To suffer then for Christ, it is to loose all for his Truth, for his Faith, when he requireth. Therefore though Heretiques may glory in their sufferings, and they be canonized as Saints amongst their Disciples, yet they will be found to have lost their blood in vain, and that they were not the Lord Christs, but the devils



devils Martyrs. The *Donatists* of old, yea those *Circumcelliones*, that would kill themselves, and like mad men, would make others kill them, did triumph in the name of Martyrs. The *Messaliani* also, because they were punished for their idols, called themselves *Martyriani*, the *Martyrians*; as if they only were the Martyrs. How greatly are the Popish Calenders filled with their saints, when yet some of them dyed of desperate and high rebellions and treasons? So that this alwaies falleth out, as men are perswaded of their way, so they judge it true persecution or false. *Hastia* did truly call the *Donatists* persecutions, *Persecutiones steriles, barren and fruitlesse*; as losing the crown of glory, though they boasted of them. On the other side, the rigid *Lutherans* did condemn our Martyrs in Queen *Maries* daies, (because they dyed against that error, That Christ was bodily present in the Sacrament;) yea, and called them *Martyres Diaboli*, The Devils Martyrs. This (I confesse) is more grievous many times, then all the persecutions of the adversaries, when those who are of the same general profession, yet for some particular differences, shall so uncharitably censure one another: But this is no new thing in the Church of God. The *Socinians*, though they blaspheme the Deity of Christ, and their doctrine is not simply heresie, but blasphemy also, yet they will admire their sufferings, as if for Christ also. The *Polonian Gentleman*, that writ *Socinus* his life, would preferre him above *Luther* and *Ignatius*. As for *Ignatius*, the Father of Jesuites, we have nothing to do with him; but that he should preferre him above *Luther* for the greatnesse of his faith, *Because* (saith he) *Luthers Doctrine at the first had many to applaud it, but Socinus had few or none to encourage him*: Though we might say, *Luthers* was univetsally hated, the whole world being then subject to the Pope, yet that can be nothing with that writer, who confesseth that pride and vain-glory, may make all a mans sufferings to be fewel to it. Thus you see, how that all suffering parties in Religion, will pretend to Christ, and plead they suffer for him; but as Christ is Christ, though there have risen many false Christs, so suffering and persecution for Christ is truly so; and some there are, and they only, who can claim this honour, though others do gloriously pretend to it. It is a true rule of *Austins*, *Causa non pena facit Martyrem*, Not the punishment, but the cause makes a Martyr. Even as *Causa, non separatio, facit schismaticum*: It must be indeed the Doctrine of Christ, not our opinions and presumptions we suffer with.

Thirdly, The Scripture expresseth this, *Suffering for righteousness sake*. He that suffereth for doing that which is righteous, suffereth for Christ. *Mat. 5. 10.* *If ye be persecuted for righteousness sake, blessed are ye*. This is made the same with suffering for Christs sake. This is good to observe, lest we should think, that then we only suffer for Christ, when the matter we are troubled for, is either Christ himself, or his truth and ordinances; something that is immediately imputed upon Christ. No: this is to be extended farther. For, when a Magistrate is zealous to rebuke sinne, and put it to shame, if he be maligned for this, *he suffereth for Christ*. So, if a private Christian set himself, in a lawfull way, against all the impieties that abound where he liveth, and thereupon all his neighbours hate and oppose him, *he suffers for Christ*: And all because it is for righteousness. Insonuch that thou maiest take much comfort herein, as one Martyr did, That it is not for any wickednesse of thine, any wrong or injury thou hast done them; only because thou hast had a zeal for God and his glory: therefore it is that they rise up with such malice against thee. And let this encourage all such, who desire to have all ungodlinesse and dishonour to God by sinne, be wholly rooted out; though in this labour they have many oppositions, and much hatred, yet remember it is for Christ. It is true indeed, that besides meer righteousness, there must be also a knowledge of Christ: *For without faith, it is impossible to please God*, Heb. 11. 3. And therefore, though

3. For righteousness sake.



*Aristides* the just, was banished for righteousness, and *Socrates* put to death, for maintaining there was but one God; yet these cannot be said to suffer for Christ, because they had no knowledge of him: Seeing Christ is only in the Church, therefore there cannot be any true suffering for him, but in the Church.

4. For a good conscience.

Lastly, In respect of the object matter, Then we suffer for Christ, when we are persecuted for keeping a good conscience, and will not break the peace thereof for all the advantages in the world. Thus the Apostle *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 3. 16. maketh the having of a good conscience, to be equivalent to suffering for righteousness sake, and also for the Name of Christ. This good conscience consists in this, That whereas the enemies and persecutors speak all evil of us as evil doers, they may at last be ashamed for such false accusations. Here you see, none ever persecuted the Church of God, but they laid foul things to their charge: That as they did put the Christians sometimes in Bear-skins, to make the dogs tear them with the greater rage, so also they have turned their names into Heretiques, Schismaticks, and every odious title, that so they might be the more justified in their cruel waies. Now then, to suffer with, and for a good conscience, is to be innocent from all these calumnies; that we dare appeal to God, as Christ said, *For which of the good works do ye stone me?* So, for what good is it that I have done, you reproach, you revile and persecute me? But when we say a good conscience, we mean, that which is truly so, and informed out of Gods Word; otherwise, as *Paul* said, he had a good conscience, while he was a Pharisee, and thought he was bound to do against Christ what he did. So, many deluded consciences may indure much misery, yea death it self, with a good conscience thus farre, that they do not go against any light thereof: They are not as some Heretiques, *αυτοκατακριτοι*, self-condemned, as it is commonly expounded; No, they may think they are bound to suffer as they do: Yea, if they should recant their errors, though never so damnable, while their conscience is perswaded to the contrary, they would sinne against God, (not because they renounce an error materially, but because they do that which formally appeareth a truth to them) and it may be bring much horror and terror upon their own consciences. It is not enough therefore to make a man a sufferer for Christ, if in a false way, because he is perswaded so; his conscience doth not tell him to the contrary; he hath much comfort doing as he doth; whereas, if he should do otherwise, he should have no peace: For, conscience is but an inferiour Judge, and is no further to command, then guided by the Word of God; and when it is so, then whosoever will not please men, but indure all hardship, rather then wound this conscience, this man suffers for Christ. Thus you see what it is to suffer for Christ, in the Scripture expression, and let it be thy earnest prayer to God, to have a preparednesse of heart thus to suffer. Oh, consider how much Christ suffered for thee, both from God and man! He suffered in his Name in all reproach and ignominy, dying a most accursed death, and shalt thou be so tender and delicate, as not to indure the mocks and rages of men for him? Shall Christ be in *cruce*, and thou in *luce*? Christ in *convivis*, and thou in *convivis*? Christ in *patibulo*, and thou in *Paradiso*? (as *Gerbard* expresseth it.) Oh fear lest this prove dreadfull at the latter end!





S E R M. XLVII.

*What Qualifications they must be endowed with, who suffer in a right manner for Christ?*

2 COR. 1. 5.

*For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.*

**W**HAT it is to suffer for Christ *ex parte objecti*, in respect of the matter for which, hath already been dispatched. We now proceed to shew, What is required *ex parte subjecti*; What are the qualifications necessary in him, who doth truly suffer for Christ. When we read of so many glorious priviledges promised to such as are troubled for Christs sake, you must know, that their bare suffering, no not for that which is righteous, is enough to entitle them to this blessedness; but there must be the Adverb as well as the Noun: it must not only be *pro bono*, but *bone*, for that which is good; but also in a good manner for suffering and martyrdom it self; as all other duties is not integrated of all its causes; as it is not enough to pray, to hear, though these for the matter be commanded, but they must be done in an holy and spiritual manner. Thus it is not enough to suffer, or to be persecuted, and that for Christs sake, unlesse also we have that holy frame of heart in suffering, which Gods word doth require.

Let us then examine this truth, viz. *What are the requisites to qualifie a true sufferer for Christ?* When his cause is good, his heart, his ends also must be good. Therefore that ordinary saying, *Causa non poena facit Martyrem*, The cause not the punishment doth make a Martyr, must be further limited, for the cause doth not, unlesse there be also those concomitant graces in the subject, as well as there is truth in the object; and we shall find this suffering temper to have as curious ingredients into it, as there was into that precious ointment, made for the high Priest alone, and no wonder, for it is the highest pitch of love we can arrive at, to suffer for him, and it is the most contrary to flesh and blood: So that none can do this for Christ, but such who are wonderfully enabled by him.

First, *Therefore in a sufferer for Christ, there is required Faith in the eminent and powerfull actings thereof.* It is as impossible to suffer without faith, as a bird to fly without wings. It's faith alone that can remove these mountains in the Sea, *Heb. 11.* Those great exploits the Saints did, yea and those wonderfull sufferings they underwent, is attributed by the Apostle, wholly to their faith. Now this faith requisite to true suffering for Christ, emptieth it self into two chanel, there must be a *Dogmatical Faith*, and a *Fiducial Faith*. A *Dogmatical Faith* is that whereby a man is assured of the truths he suffereth for as divine, and because of Divine Authority. Faith must be, as *Heb. 11. 1.* an *Assurance and Conviction*. The substance and evidence of things. For if a man have not this faith, it's obstinacy and pertinacy, not faith that maketh him suffer, as we see in Hereticks.

Hence

What are the qualifications of those who suffer truly for Christ.  
1. Faith.



Hence also it is that a meer Opinionist or Sceptick in Religion, will never suffer for Christ, because he hath no faith, but opinion in Religion. So likewise those who are of a Religion meerly for humane Authority sake, because of the custome and Laws where they live, commanding such a Religion; as those amongst the *Gracians*, that were called *Melchites*, because they followed the Religion the King was of (though indeed the Orthodox were so branded by the Heretical party, *Vide Hornbeck. de Gracis.*) These cannot suffer truly for Christ. Indeed they may suffer for their Religion, as it's local and traditional to them, as *Turks* and *Jews* do; but yet this is not from faith, which doth necessarily relate to divine testimony. This then cuts off the glory which Hereticks and erroneous persons may boast of; if they suffer *truly*, they suffer with a *true Faith*; if they have a *true Faith* that can be proved and demonstrated out of Gods Word. And when we say a *Dogmatical Faith*, that must be understood in respect of its compleatnesse and integrity, as to Fundamentals. No man can suffer truly for Christ, that peremptorily denieth any Fundamental; if he hold the foundation, though he build hay and stubble, superstructive errors, yet if he do not demolish any of the foundation stones, he may be *saved, but so as by fire*. And truly if this charity be not allowed, we shall scarce find any person or Church truly suffering for Christ. For where hath there been such a sound faith in Fundamentals, *circa-fundamentals*, and *praeter-fundamentals*, as that there hath not been any spot or wrinkle in the face of the Church. This prerogative belongs to the Church in Heaven. They therefore suffer for Christ, who are persecuted for his truths, though happily they erre in many things not necessary to salvation. But if they deny any Fundamentals (I do not say doubt, and that for a season, as the Apostles did about the nature of Christs Kingdome, and his Resurrection) and that with persevering obstinacy, then though he suffer for one Fundamental, yet because he denieth another, he doth in effect destroy the whole building of Christ. Thus when a *Macedonian* suffered for holding the Deity of Christ, being put to death by an *Arian*, the primitive Church never judged him a *Martyr*, because he denied the Deity of the Holy Ghost. There is therefore required a sound *Dogmatical Faith*; for which cause some have doubted, Whether the Church did well in making all those infants, which were killed by *Herod*, because of Christ, in reckoning them among *Martyrs*. For they did not know any thing of Christ, neither it may be many of their parents had any true faith about him. Certainly they cannot be called *Martyrs* or *Sufferers* for Christ in an active sense, but passively only.

The second act of faith, is a *fiducial dependance on the promise of God, and his Power, which is able to raise up the heart above all fears and discouragements, yea to represent prisons, palaces, and coals of fire, beds of roses, such a transubstantiating nature is faith of*. It was faith, *Heb. 11.* which made *Moses* esteem the reproaches of Christ more than all the glory and honour which was in *Pharaoh's court*; especially faith as it is the substance of things hoped for. As it maketh Heaven and glory present, so it's admirably quickning and enlivening the heart of him that suffereth. It is therefore called *The shield of faith, which above all, or to all (as some expound) we are to take*, as if no other part of the spiritual armoury would do any good, unlesse we had faith, *Ephes. 6. 16.* Hence when *Peter* was to undergo Satans winnowings, which were chiefly by persecutions, Christ saith, *He prayed that his faith might not fail him, Luk. 22. 32.* not his fortitude, patience or zeal, but his faith, because this is the root; the tree can never fail as long as the root is good. It was want of faith made many intimes of persecution sacrifice to Idols, and deliver the Bible to be burnt. It was want of faith made *Spira* fall into so great an Apostasie. Thus faith is the chief grace that enableth to suffer for Christ. This makes weak, strong, and Lambs, Lions.

Secondly;



Secondly, Another qualification to suffer for Christ, is *Love*, a grace not indeed to be exalted above faith, but yet as necessary in its sphere, where it hath to do, as that is; and as faith, so this love required in every sufferer doth discover it self two ways: There must be *heartly love to God and Christ*, for whom we suffer; and there must be *love to man*, yea to our enemies and persecutors, or else we shall lose the advantage of all our sufferings. The Apostle speaketh fully to this, 1 Cor. 13. 3. *Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing*: And what charity is this? Even two-fold, First, *A love of God and Christ*. If thou sufferest because of force and necessity, thou canst not avoid it; this is not to suffer rightly. It must be true love to Christ and his glory, that thou preferrest his glory above all thy comforts, even life it self. And indeed this is the greatest expression of thy love to Christ, when thou canst die for him, as Christ discovered his great love in dying for us. A man that doth not love Christ, cannot suffer for Christ. The second act of charity is, *To love our enemies, our persecutors*. While they are railing, we are to pray; while they are persecuting, we are to bless: and truly by this we are known to be Christs Disciples, more than by enlargements, or any miracles. When one met with a Christian, and falling upon him in a great rage, beating and buffeting of him, saying, *What great thing did Christ ever do?* The Christian replied, *Even this, that though you beat and abuse me, yet Christ hath taught me to pray for you*. If therefore malice, and a revengefull spirit be predominant in thee, while thou sufferest, Oh consider, this is not to suffer as Christ did.

Thirdly, *There is required in him that suffereth for Christ, Spiritual fortitude and courage*. No such enemy to this duty of suffering, as worldly fears and pusillanimity of spirit. Indeed there is a godly fear, whereby we have an holy jealousy of our strength, and therefore rest alone upon Gods power: and this is an excellent preservative against Apostasie in the hour of temptation. Many that have been exceeding fearful, have yet been more faithfull and stout in the hour of danger, then those who have been more confident, as many instances in the History of the *Martyrs* will evidence. When *Peter* was so presumptuous, as to say, *Though all men should forsake thee, yet I will not*: He proved more cowardly than any. So that there is a good humble fear, whereby we renounce our own strength, and this we are to preserve. But then there is a carnal, worldly, natural and excessive fear, this is to be mortified. Now against this, Christian courage is the proper help; but this is the gift of Gods Spirit. Therefore none can suffer for Christ, but such who have the Spirit of God inhabiting them. It's a gift to suffer not only by way of honour, but also by way of power. Hence when *Stephen* and others were unable to be bold against their adversaries, they are said to be filled with the holy Ghost. And thus *Timothy* is exhorted to be strong in the grace of God, 2 Tim. 2. 1. and to endure hardnesse as a good souldier of Christ. So Ephes. 6. 10. *Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*. It is true, *Aristotle* speaketh of fortitude a moral vertue, despising deaths and dangers; but he was ignorant of God, and so giveth us a Gloworm in stead of a Star. Pray therefore for this holy courage in the way of God.

3. Spiritual fortitude and heavenly courage.

Fourthly, *To suffer for Christ there is required, An holy Wisdom and prudence*. For it is not *Christian fortitude*, unless regulated by *Christian prudence*. Discretion is the salt to season all our Sacrifices: for to Sacrifices there was salt required, as well as fire. When our Saviour gave that admirable counsel, *Be Wise as Serpents, and innocent as Doves*, Matth. 10. 16. he sheweth what an excellent temper even *ad pondus* a Christian should be of. The Serpent must not eat up the Dove, yet a Dove-like temper must be accompanied with wisdom. Courage to suffer without wisdom, is like *Samson* without eyes, and many times did more

4. Holy wisdom and prudence.



more dishonour God, then all sufferings did honour him. *Austin* disliked the zeal of some, who demolished the Heatherish Idols, of their own private accord, having no Authority thereunto. The indiscretion of one *Andas* a Bishop, setting fire on a *Persian* Temple, where they worshipped fire as a god, brought a sad and fore persecution; and when the Bishop was commanded to build it up again at his own charges, for his refusal he was put to death. Now saith an *Ecclesiastical Primitive Writer*, *I discommend him for his imprudence in demolishing the Temple, but I admire his zeal that he would die rather than rebuild it.* He then suffereth for Christ, that hath prudence and wisdom to order his zeal, so that he suffer not for his own folly, but meerly for Christ. Only this is a very nice point, to distinguish prudence from carnal policy; but that is not my work now.

## 5. Patience.

Fifthly, *We are alwayes to remember Patience, as that which is a special qualifier of every one to suffer.* You have need of patience, saith the Apostle, *Heb. 10. 36.* Therefore *Heb. 6. 12.* Faith and Patience are put together, as those two which made the godly inherit the promises, *Rom. 12. 12.* Patient in tribulation. This holy patience is that which doth quiet and compose all the waves and storms of the soul; it commands all diffident and unbelieving thoughts, all murmurings and repinings to be gone. Therefore it's said, *In patience possesse your souls.* And *Jam. 13.* Let patience have its perfect work. If therefore thou art called any wayes to suffer for Christ, take heed of fretting, of repinings, of unrulinesse of heart; for impatience argueth a want both of faith in, and love of Christ. The *Martyns* were admirable in the patience they discovered under the most provoking torments; they suffered as if it had been in anothers body, and not their own.

## 6. An heart mortified to all earthly comforts.

Sixthly, *To suffer there is required a mortified heavenly heart, as to all earthly comforts and relations; not to know father, or mother, or life it self comparatively to the cause and glory of Christ.* And this makes it so difficult to suffer. This hath made the Apostates, that have many times been in the Church. This hath filled the hearts of many with woe and wounds implacably: For their childrens sake, for their lives sake, they deny Christ and a good conscience; and how can it be otherwise, while Earth is dearer than Heaven, when we esteem the favour of men, more than the favour of God? This hath proved bitter wormwood to many at last.

## 7. Pure and holy motives.

Lastly, *To suffer for Christ, there is required pure and holy motives.* To lose all for Christs sake, out of meeke conscience; that this is the only cause why we are in any trouble. We may read both in sacred and prophane Histories, how men have suffered even death it self, only for vain-glory. All *Aristotles* vertuous men, they were ambitious and vain-glorious men. The very Heathen could make it *Laudem immensa cupido*, as well as *Amor patriæ*. We would think it a madnesse to lose comforts and life for an airy bubble of windy glory, yet many have been thus transported: not only *Philosophus*, but *Hereticus est animal gloria, vanissimum.* If then it's not Scripture-grounds, but ambitious vain-glorious principles that make thee to suffer, Christ doth not, will not provide sugar for thy bitter pills. Thus have we seen, what is required to suffer for Christ. Oh the difficulty of this duty! No wonder so much seed hath withered away, when the scorching Sunne of persecution did arise! No wonder Christ hath many Swallow-friends that endure with him the Summer time onely! No wonder few are lovers of Christ for Christs sake. As *Alexander* had more φιλοβασιλείας, then φιλαλεξάνδρου. These are the Bees that follow for the honey-pot only. Now to all these we must adde this Caution, A Christian that suffereth for Christ, though he have not those qualifications in a perfect degree, but find corruption opposing every one of them: He must not therefore cast away his confidence: for we can no more suffer perfectly for Christ, then do perfectly for him; and if

our



our gracious works cannot justify us, no more can our gracious sufferings, Martyrdom is not meritorious. Though we shed our blood for Christ, yet the blood of Christ must cleanse that duty also. The *Martyrs* died only in resting upon Christ for salvation; and no wonder the godly heart finds more imperfections in his sufferings, more carnal fear and impatience than in other duties, because this is the hardest service Christ doth ever put his upon. What else is to be said in this point, will come in in the next particulars.



## SERM. XLVIII.

*How many wayes, and by what means Christ comforteth those who suffer for him.*

2 COR. I. 5.

*So our consolation aboundeth by Christ.*

**T**He second absolute Proposition in the Text is, *That our comfort aboundeth by Christ.* The Greek word *παράκλησις*, is rendred by some *Exhortation*, but more generally and fitly *Consolation*. Though this be spoken in the singular number, and afflictions in the plural, yet this is to be understood collectively, as a treasure that hath all kind of comforts in it, not one or two, but all. Therefore the word *περισσεύει*, is here repeated again, *aboundeth*, which is to be understood, partly *repletively*, it filleth the hearts of those that do suffer for Christ; and partly *diffusively*, it extends also to the comfort of others. And then you have the cause of all this, *By Christ.* Christ who is the cause of their sufferings, is also the cause of their comfort. As from the same root proceedeth both the Rose and its pricks: Thus from Christ, the same Fountain cometh both bitter and sweet. Were not this added, who would suffer for Christ, who would lose all for him; but Christ hath so ordained it, that these sufferings are advantageous to us; and though we lose in the retail, yet we gain in the bulk and whole. Observe,

*That as our sufferings are for Christ, so by the same Christ are our comforts.*

As our sufferings are for Christ, so are our comforts by him.

Though he strike with one hand, yet he supporteth with the other. If David said to the Priest who fled to him, many of them being slain at Nob, by the bloody cruelty of Saul, *Stay with me, I am the occasion of your deaths, thou shalt fare as I fare.* How much more will Christ own such, who suffer for him, saying, Depend upon me, for I am the cause of all the reproaches and cruel usages you meet with in the world.

But to explain this, Let us consider, *In what respects comforts may be said to abound by Christ.* And

First, *Efficiently*; He being the same with God, is therefore a *God of all consolation.* Yea Christ as a Mediator he is sensible of our temptations, knoweth our need and wants, and therefore the more ready to comfort. Christ that

How our comforts abound by Christ. 1. Efficiently.



wanted comfort himself, and therefore had an Angel sent to comfort him, is thereby the more compassionate and willing to comfort us. Thus you may read Christ and God put together in this very act, *2 Thess. 2. 16, 17. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, who hath given us everlasting consolation, comfort your hearts.* Paul here prayeth, that both Jesus Christ, and God the Father would comfort them. Christ therefore not only absolutely as God, but relatively as Mediator, is qualified with all fittesse and fulnesse to communicate consolation; he is the fountain and head, as of grace, so of comfort.

2. Meritoriously.

Secondly, We are comforted by Christ *Meritoriously*; he hath merited at the hands of God, our comfort; for without Christs death and atonement, we were no more subjects prepared for comfort, then the damned Angels. Had all mankind with *Dives* begged but for a drop of comfort; such was the gulph between God and us, that it could not be obtained: So that by Christ a way is made for our consolation: Christ did not only obtain the communication of the holy Ghost in the gifts and graces thereof. So that as by Christ the Spirit of God is given to the Church, as a guide to teach and lead into all truth, as the sanctifying Spirit, and use of all holinesse: So he is also as the *Comforter*, who giveth every drop of consolation, that any believer doth enjoy. Though therefore joy and comfort be in Scripture attributed to the holy Ghost, as the appropriated and applying cause thereof; yet this is wholly because of the merits of Christ: And therefore we may pray for comfort upon the same grounds, as we doe for holinesse; They are both the fruits of Christs death.

3. Objectively.

Lastly, We are comforted by Christ *Objectively*, that is in him, and from him we take our comfort. As Christ is called *Our righteousness*, because in and through his righteousness we are accepted of in him, we are compleat: So Christ is *our comfort*, because in him we find matter of all joy, though there be troubles and vexations from the creatures, though the Sunne and Moon be turned into blood, all powers threaten persecution, yet from and in Christ he can abundantly rejoyce. And indeed this is the wine the carnal man never drinketh of, the honey he never tasted of. The world is a stranger to this joy in Christ; They rejoyce in riches, in honours, in worldly advantages, but they know not what it is to rejoyce in Christ, as our Mediator, and treasure of all fulnesse. *Phil. 3. 3.* They are said to be *the circumcision, who rejoyce in Jesus Christ, and have no confidence in the flesh.* As therefore in the day time we see the Sunne only and no Stars: Thus the people of God in their sufferings behold Christ the Sunne of Righteousnesse; and as for the Stars of the creatures, they do not afford any light. What made the *Martyrs* leap for joy? Could they take any comfort from the world? No, that was an *Egypt* to them, a valley of tears; so that it was in Christ only that they did rejoyce. For want of the knowledge and experience of this, it is that the unsound professor, will deny Christ, and his truth rather then suffer the losse of any thing, because he feeleth more sweetnesse, more pleasure, in his goods, in his pleasures, in this world, then he can do in Christ. It is the gracious heart that can thus rejoyce in Christ.

How many wayes Christ makes his comforts to abound to those that suffer for him?

1. By perswading them of the goodnes of the cause, why they suffer.

In the next place, Let us consider, *How many wayes Christ doth make our consolations in sufferings for his sake to abound.* And

First, *Christ doth it by assuring and perswading of our hearts concerning those truths and righteous actions, we do suffer for.* If comfort arise from suffering for Christ, then the more assured we are, that we do suffer for him, the greater is our consolation. If a man have great doubts in his heart, whether he suffers for Christ or not? Whether it be a truth or an error that he is troubled for? Whether he was a basie-body, or not?

Whether



Whether he did keep within his calling and bounds, or not? If (I ſay) there be theſe heſitances and diſceptations in his mind, How can he have any comfort? Therefore that our comfort may be full, Chriſt giveth us the riches of aſſurance in our underſtanding; Faith becomes the evidence, and ſtrong conviction, *Heb. 11.* upon their ſouls, inſomuch that they know they are in the truth; They know it's righteouſneſſe they ſuffer for. Thus you may obſerve the Apoſtles in all the oppoſitions they met with from the world, and all the malice of Satan, yet never queſtioning or doubting, whether they were deluded or no, but were fully aſſured of thoſe things they did preach. Now this conſideration is the more to be taken notice of, becauſe the ſufferings for Chriſt, in the latter age of the Church, have differed wonderfully from the former. For in the primitive perſecutions, their ſufferings did ariſe from *Heathens* and *Pagans*, it was for profeſſing of Chriſt, and oppoſing of Idolatry. Now theſe things were plain, here was no diſputing. But then in the after-ages of the Church, when Here-ticks got power, eſpecially when Antichriſt was exalted, and the Papacy liſted up with all ſtrength, then thoſe that did perſecute, pretended Chriſt, that what they did, they did for the honour and glory of Chriſt; and thoſe who did ſuffer, though indeed for Chriſt, yet were reputed enemies to Chriſt: And this is that which makes ſuffering for Chriſt to be a more difficult thing in theſe later dayes. The *Papiſts* that have put to death ſo many *Proteſtants*, defend themſelves with theſe glorious Titles, *That they are onely the Church of Chriſt; That Chriſt is onely amongſt them; That all who withdraw obedience from the Pope, are out of the Ark, out of hope of Salvation: That it is ſervice to Chriſt to root them out; and therefore the Doctrines ſuffered for, were not about the Trinity, the Incarnation of Chriſt, the Reſurrection; for which of old believers ſuffered from Pagans, but about Tranſubſtantiation, the Univerſal Jurisdiction of the Pope, the Infallibility of the Church, the worſhipping of Images, and praying to Saints: The Po-piſh party pleading for theſe, as allowed of by Chriſt; The Proteſtant abhorring of them, as Idolatry, and alſo injurious to Chriſt. Now on the Papiſts ſide was the whole Chriſtizen world, almoſt all the learned men, all the great men, all the devout religious men, they were zealous this way; and the *Martyrs* they were but few comparatively, many of them private men and women. What a temptation was here to thoſe that ſuffered? How eaſily might they think, what am I wiſer than all? Is it likely God would reveal that to me, which he denieth to others more learned? Beſides, they diſpute, they bring Scripture and Fathers: May not I be deluded? May not the Devil transforme himſelf into an *Angel of light*, and ſo deceive me? Truly ſuch temptations would quickly have blown down the houſe, had it been built onely upon ſand; but the *Martyrs* were eſtabliſhed upon a Rock, Chriſt gave them full aſſurance of thoſe truths they loſt all for; and this made way for their great comfort. This conviction then, and aſſurance of faith wrought by the Spirit of God, is that which is the root of our comfort, whereas doubtings and fears would diſquiet all. It is true, *Luther* ſpeaketh of himſelf, That he had many times ſuch thoughts, *Tu ſolus ſapis*, Art thou onely wiſe? What if thou art damned, and draweſt others to Hell with thee? And when a grave Divine came to him, complaining of this temptation, That of the Evangelical Doctrine, which he preached, he could not find that Faith and Aſſurance upon his ſoul he deſired, which was a bitter trouble to him. *Luther* upon the diſcloſing of this, brake out, ſaying, *I thank God I have met with one tempted, as I am tempted.* There were it may be ſome temptations and doubts ſometimes upon the ſpirits of thoſe who did ſuffer, for there was fleſh ſtill remain-*



ing in them, and the Devil was desirous to winnow them: but yet the power of Faith, and the evidence of Divine Authority in the truths they suffered for, would at last like the Sunne break forth and dissipate those mists. Therefore pray much for the guidance of Gods Spirit herein through the Word, that thy comfort may be sure. The Heretick that suffers, because he hath a false and erroneous perswasion; therefore he hath a false and a deceitfull comfort, and therefore is but like one in a dream, pleasing himself with great imaginations, when he awakeneth poor and hungry: But the true sufferer, he hath joy, and he knoweth his joy is good, and upon sound grounds, which never can be taken away.

2. By forewarning of their sufferings.

Secondly, *Christ doth comfort, by informing of us aforehand of all the troubles and sufferings which will necessarily accompany the true profession of faith in his Name.* Is not our Saviour often upon this subject? Doth he not frequently fore-tell his Disciples, what reproach and hatred they shall meet with? Doth not the Scripture also in several places insist upon this point, *That all who will live godly must suffer many tribulations; That the Disciple must not be above his Master.* Yea, that we are appointed and set by God to afflictions, they are the effect of our predetermination, as well as grace and glory is. Now in this we may be comforted, Christ hath done us no wrong; he hath told us what we must look for, it's no more then we expected. The fiery trial is not a strange thing. Surely this maketh way for much comfort, that we looked for afflictions aforehand; we prepared an Ark against the deluge should come. The Devil he being a deceiver dealerh contrary to Christ, for he tempts with pleasant baits hiding the hook; he sheweth thee pleasure and profit, but not a word of that hell and torments which will necessarily follow thereupon. But Christ tels thee of the worst at first, and keepeth his best wine to the last.

3. By informing us of his Sovereignty and conquest over the world.

Thirdly, *Christ comforteth us, by informing of us of his Sovereignty and conquest over the world.* So that both Devils, and his Instruments are but Lions in his hand, and so he lets them loose, and pulleth them off, as he pleased. If our enemies were equal, or superiour to Christ in power, then we might justly be left without comfort; but what Christ spake to his Disciples, belongs to all, *I will not leave you, John 14. 18. I will not leave you comfortlesse, Orphans,* in the original: your condition is as good, as if Christ were here corporally upon the earth, and should speak to thee to be comforted. Would not this rejoyce thee in thy afflictions, if Christ himself should come to thee and say, *Be of good comfort, I am with thee, I will support thee?* Now Christ giveth his Spirit to be a Comforter in his room. That as *Tertullian* calleth the Spirit, *Vicariam vim,* (*Lib. de pra-script.*) in respect of Doctrine; so also it is in regard of comfort; and wherein can it more be manifested then in teaching of us, that the world is conquered by Christ? *John 16. 33. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.* Faith maketh us behold this conquest over principalities and powers, as also over all adversaries: so that thou art to receive comfort, because there is no argument of discouragement; but it may be answered from Christ; and if thou art dejected, it is because thou hast low thoughts of Christ; Thou dost not judge of him, as he is.

4. By vertue of his prayer put up in that very behalf.

Fourthly, *Christ comforteth, by vertue of his prayer put up in that very behalf.* In that solemn valedictory prayer of Christ, *John 17. 13.* one end why he poured out that so affectionately before his death, was, that believers might have *Christs joy fulfilled in themselves.* It's Christs joy, and their joy; Christs efficiently; theirs subjectively. So that as there is fulnesse of grace in Christ to subdue every corruption; thus there is fulnesse of joy in him



him for every tribulation : and that this may be applied to thee, Chriſt, who cannot be denied by his Father, for he heareth him in all things, hath thus prayed to God for it. And therefore it is by virtue not onely of his death, but alſo of his prayer and interceſſion, that thou art made to rejoyce.

Laſtly, Chriſt comforts in ſufferings, by inſtructing thee of the good uſe, and heavenly advantage all theſe tribulations ſhall turn into, which is two-fold, they ſhall,

1. Turn to thy own ſpiritual and eternal good. Thou ſhalt hereby be more purified from thy filth and corruption ; this will winnow away thy chaff ; this fire will purge out thy drolle ; this will be a School, wherein thou wilt learn more ſpiritual and divine knowledge in heavenly things, then ever before. Sufferings have taught more than vaſt libraries, or the beſt books can teach.

Again, They will conduce to thy eternal Glory. God taketh up every tear in his bottle ; how much more every drop of blood ? For indeed by ſuffering in the work of the Lord, thou art more than Angelical ; though the Angels do the will of God purely, chearfully and conſtantly, yet they meet with no troubles nor perſecutions for it, as believers do. No wonder therefore if God at laſt take his Joſeph's out of priſon, and ſets them on thrones of glory. Beſides, believers are comforted, becauſe they know all their ſufferings will turn to the advantage of the Church. Others are comforted and encouraged by this ; what rejoycing doth this create in the heart of a believer ? as we may ſhew more largely in the next verſe.

Uſe. Of Inſtruction to all ſuch, who take upon them the profeſſion of Chriſt, let them not be in jeſt ; do not fall upon it by cuſtome and education only ; but remember when thou proffer'eſt to follow him, that he will ask, whether thou canſt be baptized with his Baptiſm or no ; he will tell thee of the troubles that follow his way ; his advice is, to ſit down and conſider with thy ſelf, whether thou canſt build this houſe or no, fight this warfare or no : For it had been better for thee, never to have owned Chriſt, than by carnal fears to apoſtatize, ſaying, I did not look for theſe reproaches, theſe troubles ; I thought not the way would have been ſo difficult. Luke 9. 57. We have ſome come voluntarily to Chriſt, proffering to follow him whithersoever he did go ; but Chriſt accepted them not, becauſe they underſtood not how much they muſt ſuffer in his way, and therefore when they had put hand to the plough, they would look back. Oh then again and again look upon what terms you profeſſe Chriſt ! If thou canſt not be a Martyr in thy ſoul, how wilt thou be in thy body ? If thou canſt not leave thy ſins, thy luſts for his ſake ; how canſt thou thy life ?

5. By inſtructing them of the ſpiritual advantages which come from ſuch ſufferings.

SERM.





## SERM. XLIX.

*How and why God alwaies proportions a Saints Comforts to his Sufferings, and often makes them to overflow? And why he often denies Comforts to his People in their troubles.*

2 COR. 1. 5.

*For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolations also aboundeth by Christ.*

**W**E shall now put a period to our discourse about this text; there remaineth the last Observation to be improved, which is from the *habitude* or *proportion*, that is between our *sufferings* and our *comforts*, as the one aboundeth, so the other aboundeth. Should we have great sufferings, and small comforts, this would be to put some few drops of honey into a fountain of gall: The bitterness would still abide. The Lord therefore doth commensurate his comforts according to our afflictions; he layeth a Gyants burden upon Gyants shoulders, and Childrens burden upon a Child.

God doth proportion our comforts to our sufferings.

Doct. *That God doth proportion our comforts to our sufferings.*

If our sufferings increase, our consolations increase. So that if thy afflictions are greater, and more multiplyed then ever, thou hast no cause to fear, for thy supports and cordials shall also be more increased. As thou art a man of sorrows, so thou shalt be also a man of joys, if thou callest upon all that passe by, as the Church did, *Lam. 1. 12. Behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me!* So thou shalt call to others, to come and see the wonderfull mercies which God hath vouchsafed unto thee.

But to pour this oyl into the wounds of those that are afflicted, consider,

Christ alwaies accommodates himself to the capacities of his people.

First, *That the Lord Christ in all his dispensations, still accommodateth himself to the capacity of his people.* He regards what they can bear; like the wise Physician, doth not give the strongest Physick that may be, to expell the disease, but looketh to the infirmity of his Patient. We see Christ did this in the promulgation of the truths of the Gospel; if that Sunne of righteousness had appeared at first in his noon-day light, weak eyes would have been offended thereat; he did not injoyn them those high observances of fasting, &c. at first. To which purpose also, (*Luk. 5. 27.*) he useth that notable similitude, *how no man putteth new wine into old bottles, but the bottles break.* There is regard to be had to the Auditours. Paul said, *1 Cor. 3. 1. I could not speak*

unto



unto you as spiritual, but as carnal. And indeed, all may observe, that Christ did communicate the knowledge of divine things to the Disciples by degrees: *I have many things to say unto you, (Joh. 16. 12.) but you cannot bear them now.* As the Nurse cheweth her meat for the Infanc, doth not give it whole to him; thus did Christ as a Doctor to his Auditours, still accommodating himself according to the receptivity of the subject. In like manner, thus also God doth in laying afflictions upon us: He takes notice how frail thou art; if this suffering should be brought upon thee, it would bruise thee to pieces; or if it lay longer on thee, it would make thee put out thy hand to wickednesse; and therefore he taketh it off in due time. If the fourth day would consume thee, the third day thou shalt be freed from it. The Apostle speaketh fully to this, *1 Cor. 10. 13. God is faithfull, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.* Above your strength, (that is) not our own natural strength; for there is not the least temptation, the least affliction, but if left to our selves, we should fall under it. The voice of a maid to Peter, before ever he came into any danger, made him deny Christ, with cursings and swearings. Therefore he meaneth the strength which Christ will furnish us with. So that the sense is, as any temptation cometh, so your strength also is supplied. And indeed, as long as Christ makes us stand upright, so long the affliction cannot hurt us; but when we bow and yeild to carnal reasonings, then we miscarry. As a Pillar, as long as it stands firm and upright, will bear any weight; but when it begins to bow, or grow crooked and sloping, then it presently falleth. We have then here a text full of comfort; It is not every affliction, every suffering thou maist be exercised with, but that for which God hath furnished and prepared thee with strength for. We have a notable explanation of this, *Isa. 20. 28.* where under a parabolical similitude of the divers waies of the Husbandman to thresh out his Corn, the lesser grain not requiring such weight as the other, is signified, that God maketh a difference in our afflictions; some are more knotty and difficult then others, and therefore they need more strong Physick to free them from their disease. The cart wheel is not turned about upon the cummin, a rod will serve to beat them out: A word will do more to some, then a blow to others.

Secondly, *God in his dispensations, doth not only keep to an equality, but he doth superabound, his mercy doth overflow.* The Lord alwaies giveth full heaped measure, overflowing: In all things Christ hath an overplus. There cannot be an hyperbole in his goodnesse to us: As Luther said, *Celum & gehenna non patiuntur hyperbolen.* So neither do the riches and grace of God in Christ: For if first we consider Christ comparatively with Adam, the one is the original of condemnation, the other of justification. There we shall see, that Christ is not only equal to Adam, but exceedeth him, transcendeth him. You may read *Rom. 5. 15.* where the Apostle making a Divine collation between Adam and Christ, as two heads, when he had instanced in Adam, how powerfull he was to convey sinne and condemnation to all; then on the contrary he instanceth in Christ, and there he makes an *how much more*, still on Christs side: *If through the offence of one, many be dead, much more the grace of God through Christ, hath abounded to many.* And *Vers. 17.* *If by one death reigned upon many, much more they which receive abundance of grace, shall reign in life.* Here you see, that though sinne by Adam be very terrible and dreadfull in it self, yet if compared with Christ, it is but as the Nations to God, like a drop, or the small dust in the ballance. Therefore Christ thought it not enough to remove the evil Adam brought upon us, but to do it abundantly, with a *how much more*. Thus also, if we speak of the grace of Christ in pardoning of sinne, we do not meet with grace just equall, and no more, to remove the guilt of it, but it doth overflow. Even as the light of the Sunne, is

The mercies  
of God do  
often over-  
flow.

not



not only enough to inlighten thy eyes, but for all the world besides. *Rom. 5.20.* Where sinne abounded, grace hath much more abounded. Hence the Prophet compareth Gods mercy in pardon of sinne, to the Heavens comparatively with the earth, which is but as a *punctum* to it; thus are all our sinnes to the grace of God. So likewise the righteousness of Christ, is not a garment too narrow for us, or that will just serve to cover our nakednesse, and no more; but it is an infinite righteousness, as it is in Christ, though the application of it to us, be according to our necessity. Thus Christ calleth to the Church, *Cant. 5.1.* to drink of his wine abundantly. Hence it's called riches of grace; and, *unspeakable riches of grace.* And Christ said, He came that his people might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. Thus the power of God, the favour of God, is in abundance; Heaven, and salvation, is in abundance. As Christ is our overflowing fountain in all other things, so in this of consolation likewise. Hence some have received so much comfort from God, that they have not been able to bear it: They have said, They had enough, more would even overwhelm. For there are those who dyed by joy, especially when sudden, as well as by grief.

In the next place, let us consider the grounds, *Why God is thus mercifull*, that he not just only proportions his comforts to our sufferings, but maketh them to exceed. And

*Reasons.*

1. Because God in all his administrations doth still regard his own glory, not our desert.

First, *Because God in these administrations, doth chiefly regard his own honour and greatnesse, not our deserts.* Now because God is a great God, therefore his mercy is great mercy; his comforts are great comforts: Though thou art not worthy to have such, yet it becometh Gods glory and greatnesse to give such. Wonder not then at the supports and comforts which Gods people may have, even in the Whales belly, where there seemeth to be no hope: For, consider who it is that giveth them, from what fountain they flow, even the Lord Christ, the fountain of all fulnesse, for his people; and then you will say, Our cruce is too little to receive all the oyl he could create for us. So that the afflicted soul hath this encouragement in prayer; Lord, I ask no more then a great God is able to give; though I am unworthy to receive it, yet thou art worthy to be exalted, as the great God, who can as easily give great comforts as little comforts. God can as easily give an Ocean as a drop.

2. Because of Gods faithfulness to his Promises.

Secondly, *It belongs to the faithfulness of God in his Promises, to make comforts abound, where sufferings.* For, by what reason God out of his faithfulness will give any support at all, by the same reason he will double and treble his consolations as need requireth. It is a rule among the Schooles, *Sicut se habet simpliciter ad simpliciter, ita magis ad magis, & maximum ad maximum.* Now then, as God hath promised and ingaged to support under sufferings, so also as these do abound, his comforts must abound; otherwise, his people would be overcome by their temptations, which is against his Promise. For as such a degree of heat will not warm cold water, unlesse it be made more intense; so neither will comfort simply, unlesse made more and increased, serve against grievous afflictions. An ordinary boat would not be like the Ark, when that deluge of waters did overflow: This support, this joy thou hast now, would not serve, if God should exercise thee with greater tryals. The widows food of *Sarepta* might have served her in an ordinary way, but when the famine came, and no supply could be had, then her stock would quickly be spent. Therefore urge God, and say, Lord, if thou bringest me in a wilderness, thou wilt provide Manna for me; by what reason thou givest me any comfort, give me more now that my sufferings are more.

3. Otherwise God in his expressions of mercy would be exceeded by man.

Thirdly, *If God should not increase the strength and comforts of his people, according to the increase of their afflictions, then he who is the fountain of all pity and wisdom, should be exceeded by man, who is but a cistern receiving from this fountain.*



*fountain.* For such is the care and compassion of a man to his beast, that he will lay no more burdens on it, then it can bear, and when he puts it to more labour, he giveth it more meat to strengthen it. Now shall man do thus to his beast, and not God to his Children? So the Artificer, the Refiner of gold, when he throweth his gold into the fire, he lets it be no longer then the dross is purged away; it shall not stay a moment longer then will serve for the preparing it to excellent use: And shall not the great God of Heaven use such wisdom to his people, when in afflictions, which are called their fire to try them?

Lastly, *If God should not give proportionable comfort in sufferings, his glorious end would not be obtained in bringing these upon us.* For these are to demonstrate and draw out our graces; *That we may be more then conquerours*, Rom. 8. And, *That we may* *καπερ υπερ*, as 1 Cor. 10. *more then bear.* It is not enough merely to conquer afflictions, but we are *more then conquerours*: For, there is no conquerour but hath some losse, but the Children of God lose nothing, for they are advantaged every way, both here and hereafter. So that as their sufferings are an effect of their Predestination, thus also their support and consolation floweth from the same fountain. Shall God, as the Authour of grace, be more deficient in his works, then as he is the Authour of nature? If then, in the course of nature, we live, and move, and have our being; yea, every thing hath a natural delight and facility to its works of nature; shall not the godly in the exercises of grace, which are most put forth in the times of trouble? God will provide, that all thy sufferings shall not be in vain.

But you may say, *Have the people of God in their sufferings, alwaies such overflowing of comfort? Are they not many times afflicted without, and destitute within?*

We have answered this heretofore, informing that *Job*, yea *Christ* himself, had sufferings without, and sufferings within: Their afflictions did abound, but their joy did not. We distinguished and explicated that case, only we shall now give some Reasons why God, at least for a time, may leave a suffering people without consolation, because then they were omitted. As

First, God in thy troubles, may deny thee comfort, *to teach thee that they are his gift.* This cooling wind bloweth when he pleaseth. We might think, that comfort was our desert, that God could not be just to leave us without it, when it is for his cause we are troubled; but God will let thee know, that when thou hast suffered to the utmost, thou hast but done thy duty; God is not beholding to thee. And therefore, if he giveth thee these cordials, know, it's of his mercy; thou hast not merited them: And when thou hast them, receive them thankfully.

Secondly, Doth God deny thee thy desired comforts? consider *whether thy sinnes have not deserved it.* For although thou sufferest for him, yet it may be, much unbelief, much impatience, much frowardnesse hath risen in thy heart; now these misty foggs, will obscure the glorious beames of his favour. God is ready with his comfort, but thou art indisposed: Thy heart is like an untuned Instrument, and so there cannot be any melodious sound.

Thirdly, *If thou hast no comfort, it may be God delayeth, and puts off, that so they may be the more welcome, when they do come.* Thus God doth not answer prayers presently, that when the mercy doth come, it may be the more esteemed. Christ delayed to raise *Lazarus*, that when he was restored to life, the mercy might be acknowledged the greater. When *Paul* and his passengers for a great while had not seen the Sun, this made them rejoyce the more when they did behold it.

Fourthly, Doth God deny thee comfort? it may be it is to try whether thy obedience be pure. Whether thou wilt serve him, though he giveth thee no wages.

4. Because otherwise Gods glorious end in his afflicting, could not be obtained.

Object.

Ans.

Why God often denies comfort in trouble.

1. To teach us that comforts are his gifts.

2. Because perhaps by our sins we have deserved it.

3. God often denies comforts for the that they may be the more welcome when they come.

4. And often to try whether my obedience be pure.



Comfort is for our refreshment, it is to encourage us. We, like Children, cannot live without these breasts; now, if denied these, though we have a stone for bread, yet thou wilt not give over suffering for Christ, then thou shewest thy self upright indeed: For we are apt to look to consolations, more than duty; to regard comfort, more than obedience. Now when thou canst say, *O Lord, I will not repine, I will not be weary of righteousness, or deny the Name of Christ, though I have no comfort at all; it is not my ease, so much as thy glory, I look at:* This will greatly in dear thee to God.

5. To teach us how we are beholding to Christ.

Fifthly, *God may deny thee comfort, to inform thee how much thou art beholding to Christ.* He suffered for thee, and that without comfort: He was willing to be deprived of it, that so he might accomplish thy Redemption. Now as Christ would be tempted like us, so God will have us tempted like Christ, that we might be the more thankfull to him. Certainly, all the paines on his body, all the disgrace and reproach he went under, was not equall to his being without comfort; yet this he indured for thee.

6. Whensoever it is necessary, we are sure to have it.

Lastly, Conclude on this, That if comfort were absolutely necessary for thee at this time, thou shouldst have it. *Rom. 8. How can he not but give us all other things, who hath given us Christ?* Is comfort equall to Christ?



## S E R M. L.

*The Saints Sufferings, are for the Churches good.*

### 2 COR. I. 6.

*And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation, and salvation, which is effectual in the induring the same sufferings, which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.*

**T**HIS Verse is acknowledged by many Learned Expositors, to be very difficult, not so much from the matter, for that is easie, as from the grammatical disposition of the words, there being several conjectures, and divers adventures about the transposing of them. In most of the Latin Copies, there are three members in the disjunction, whereas the Greek hath but two, after this manner: *Whether we be afflicted, whether we be comforted, and whether we exhort.* But according to the Greek word, which is *παρηγορούμεθα*, this would make a tautology; therefore, no doubt, this was inserted in the Latin Copies, by some, not diligently attending to what they did. Then as for the Greek, *Chrysostome* doth transpose the words otherwise then we do, putting off the second member of the disjunction, *viz. Whether we be comforted, &c.* to the next Verse, *Knowing that as you are partakers of the sufferings, &c.* and then reduceth all the rest to the former part. Some also blame *Erasmus*, for adding in the Original, *(it is;)* *Whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation:* which way our Translators also render. And indeed, the sense would runne well enough without it, relating to those words, *Our hope of you is steadfast.* But



But this is not material, for the sense is still the same. Not therefore to trouble you with these grammatical difficulties, seeing the scope and meaning of the Apostle is evident, which is, That whatsoever did befall him in his ministerial Office, it was for their good, and therefore they were to be so farre from being discouraged at his sufferings, or to despise him for them, as the false Apostles laboured to make them do, that they ought rather to honour him, and they themselves to be more animated in their sufferings for Christ. And in this the Apostle doth so overflow with words, that *Erasmus* absurdly giveth this prophane censure, *Intempestiva copia affectatio*, as if he could teach the Spirit of God how to speak. But no wonder at this presumption of his, seeing in his Epistle to *Barbirius*, (purging himself from being a *Lutheran*, much more from holding every thing that *Luther* wrote,) he addeth, *he would not be so addicted to Austin or Hierome; vix etiam ipsi Paulo, scarce even to Paul himself.* Whether this *vix* would preserve him from blasphemy, let others judge.

But come we to the first member in this distribution, wherein we have the condition supposed, the consequent and effect of it, with the amplification thereof.

I shall begin with the condition supposed, *εἴτε ὁ θλιβόμεθα*, whether we be afflicted, squeezed, or pressed; for the word signifieth such afflictions, as are like the flail to the corn, that doth bruise it. The end of this, in the general, is for the good of the Church; more particularly, for their consolation and salvation. From whence Observe,

*That the afflictions and sufferings we indure for Christ, do not only turn to our own good, but to the good of Gods Church.*

The afflictions we suffer for Christ, are not only for our own, but for the Churches good.

That they are for our own good, hath been partly spoken to. Yea every dispensation of God to those that fear him, is a benefit and an advantage: For if it be a mercy, it is *bonum Dei consolantis*; if an affliction, it is *bonum Dei admonentis*, as *Austin*. But I am now to speak of the diffusive good by afflictions in respect of others.

That sufferings for Christ are of publique edification to the Church, appeareth by two or three notable texts, concerning what *Paul* speaketh of himself, *Phil. 1. 12.* *I would ye should understand, that the things which hapned to me, have fallen out rather to the furtherance of the Gospel.* *I would ye should understand;* It is a truth that Believers should possesse themselves with: For indeed, it is a riddle, that out of this strong one should come honey, that out of darknesse should arise light, from death come life. The not understanding of this, hath made so many Apostates, thinking that the Kingdom of Christ and his waies, would never hold, because all the power of the world conspire to oppresse it; but the Apostle would have them know, that persecutions do not hinder, but further the Gospel. The treading and trampling on this Camomile, makes it thrive the better. Another remarkable text, is *2 Tim. 2. 10.* where the Apostle having shewed, that though they did cast him into bonds, yet the Word of God could not be bound; no more then a man (as *Chrysostome* observeth) that cutteth off a branch from the tree, can cut off the Sun-beams also from the Sun, that may shine upon that branch: he addeth, that *he doth indure all things for the elects sake, that they may obtain salvation.* Oh wonderfull expression! you might think *Paul* goeth too high, these words become Christ rather; Who can say this, but Christ? *He suffereth for the elects sake, that they may have salvation.* But *Paul* speaks this only as a Minister, not a Mediatour, as is more particularly to be urged: His scope is to shew, that it is not for any sinnes of his own, any wickednesse that he hath committed, but it is for the good of the Church, that



he thus suffereth. So that *Paul* doth not only propagate the Gospel by preaching, but by suffering; when he cannot preach, he doth most preach; when his person is bound in chains, then the Gospel is more enlarged: As *Herod* by cutting off *John Baptists* head, did in effect make *John's* tongue more speak, and witness against him. The last instance is, *Col. 1. 24.* which place is the more famous, because abused by the Papists, to uphold a treasure or overplus in the sufferings of the Saints, that they suffer more than they deserve; and therefore the overplus is to be dispensed by Papal authority, for the relief of such who want merits. And here cometh in their doctrine of Indulgences, which was the occasion of that Reformation wherein *Luther* was so greatly instrumental. For the Text it self, you have *Paul* professing his rejoycing in his sufferings; though so afflicted, so reproached, being made a spectacle to men and Angels, *Accounted the off-scouring of the world, yet in all this he did rejoyce.* For God loveth a cheerfull sufferer, as well as a cheerfull giver, *Si quid boni tristis feceris, per te fit, magis quam tu facis;* It is done in thee, rather than by thee, the good thou doest with grudging and reluctance. Yea admire the publick affection of *Paul*; this was not so much because he should hereby have a greater crown of glory, that he should hereby be more honoured; but principally he rejoyced, because he suffered for others, that by his persecutions many others may be emboldened to profess the Gospel. Now he sheweth in what manner he did suffer for them, *viz. By filling up that which is behind of the affliction of Christ in his flesh, for the bodies sake, which is the Church.* This seemeth strange, how could *Paul* fill up the *υπερμυατα*, the things behind of Christs sufferings? Were Christs sufferings imperfect? Could *Paul* make up that which was deficient in Christ? This would be to make *Paul* copartner with Christ in the work of the mediation; and then *Paul* might truly have said, that which once by interrogation he so vehemently denied, *Paul was crucified for them.* Therefore you must know, the sufferings of Christ are of two sorts.

The sufferings of Christ of two sorts.

1. In his Person.
2. In his members.

1. *Those which he suffered in his own Person, as Mediator and head of his Church; And thus by once offering up of himself, he for ever made perfect those that do believe in him; and thus there are no υπερμυατα, no remainders behind to be done.*

2. *There are the sufferings of the members of Christ united to him their Head; and these are called his sufferings, because of that mystical conjunction between Christ and his members; as also that sympathy that is in him with them in their sufferings. Now as Christ was appointed to sufferings, so is every member of his, by way of conformity to their Head set apart also for their sufferings; and these are the afflictions of Christ that are still behind. All the members of Christ have not yet fully suffered. In every age there are some still to be afflicted for his sake; and as long as any one believer is to suffer, so long something of Christs afflictions remaineth still behind. Therefore the Apostle addeth, He was to fulfill these afflictions in his flesh; and the end is, for the good of the Church. They suffer for the Church, but not as Christ suffereth, as will appear by some Propositions to clear the Doctrine.*

Propositions clearing the truth.

1. The sufferings of Saints for the good of the Church, are still to be distinguished from Christs sufferings.

How Christian Martyrs sufferings differ.

1. His death was not only a Martyrdom, but a propitiation.

First therefore, when we say, *That the afflictions of the godly, especially of eminent officers in the Church, are for the good of the Church, you must still distinguish them from the sufferings of Christ for the Church also.* The Martyrs they died to witness the truth, and hereby occasionally to procure salvation for others; but Christs dying for others was in a far more transcendent and efficacious way. For

1. *Christs death was not only a martyrdom, but a propitiation, and an atonement also. Christ (we grant) did suffer as a Martyr, he came into the world to bear witness to the truth. And he is said 1 Tim. 6. 13. To have witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate. But those wretched Socinians are therefore to be abhorred, because they make this the only end of his death, That he died by way of example, not by way of propitiation for our sins. Thus with them the sufferings of Christ, and of Paul for the Church, differ only gradually, not in kind. Christ died*



died as a more eminent Martyr than *Paul*, but both only by way of witness to the truth. Take we heed then, that we do not split our souls at this rock of blasphemy, denying the atonement of Christs sufferings.

2. *They differ in the efficacy also.* For *Paul's* sufferings, and so all the sufferings of the godly do only objectively, or by way of example turn to the good of others: They comfort, convert, or save others only ministerially; but Christs sufferings did meritoriously and efficiently also procure all the benefits which the Church standeth in need of. Hence remission of sinne, justification, renovation, and glorification are attributed unto his blood, which cannot be to the blood of the Martyrs. So that Christs death did by way of merit and causality procure all the priviledges the Church enjoyeth.

2. In the efficacy.

Hence in the second place, *All the sufferings which any undergo for the Churches good, they are not meritorious or satisfactory, either for our selves or others.* As the Papists do most derogatively to the honour of Christ maintain; for their Doctrine about the sufferings of Martyrs for Christs cause, is very proud and pharisaical. They dogmatize that by these he may merit and satisfie God (yet through the merits of Christ, *Tincta sanguine Christi*) yea not only thus satisfie for his own sins, but may supererogate. So that they exceed the *wise Virgins*, they will part with some of their oil, because they have more than enough. So that from the overplus of all their sufferings the Church hath a great stock and treasure to relieve those that have no merits of their own. Now this is a meer political engine in Popery, to make the Pope have indeed a great treasury, for he communicateth and dispenseth out of this stock for money. Insomuch that *Albertus Magnus* saith plainly, *That a rich man is in a farre better condition to be saved than a poor man, because he hath money to buy his pardon, and to redeem himself, which the poor hath not.* Thus these like *Judas*, make a sale and bargain of Christ; but though the godly suffer, yet their sufferings are not for that end as Christs was; even as when they obey the Law of God they do it not for that end which Christ did. For both in suffering and doing Christ was only meritorious, because he was without sin, and did more than he was bound to, which cannot be said of any Martyr.

2. Our sufferings for the Churches good are not meritorious either for our selves or others.

Thirdly, When we say, the sufferings of the godly turn to the good of others, *This is not to be understood, as if of themselves they did so, but by the mighty power and grace of God working by them.* For *Paul* cannot of himself cause comfort and courage in others; for he acknowledgeth God only to be the fountain of all comfort; and therefore he prayeth to God, that God would do good by such afflictions. And as *Paul* cannot of himself thus do good to others by his sufferings: (For it is with him, as in his preaching, *He doth but plant and water, it is God that giveth the increase*;) So neither do these sufferings work good of themselves by any intrinsecal virtue and efficacy they have. For how many by these persecutions are the rather terrified. So that as the Gospel is, though to some a favour of life, yet to others a favour of death. Thus afflictions and troubles to some do discover their hypocrisie and guile, as winnowing doth the chaff; but to others they are blessed, either to conversion, or to edification. So that in all the sufferings of the Church, we are by prayer to importune God, that by these means greater glory may come to Christ; and that these waters of persecution may be like those to the Ark, which could not drown it, but exalted it nearer to Heaven. Hence

3. That our sufferings turn to others good is not from themselves, but from the power and grace of God.

Fourthly, *We may admire the wisdom, power and goodnesse of God, that where in the enemies of Gods Church deal craftily and cruelly, in that very thing he is above them, working the contrary to that which they are intending.* For how many persecutors hath the Church had, who like *Haman* resolved to root out the very name of Christianity, and their persecutions have increased the number of Christians? Thus it must needs be madness and torment to the Churches enemies

4. Hence we may admire the wisdom, power and goodnesse of God, turning our enemies wicked intentions unto our good.

to



to see that the wayes they take to demolish, is indeed to build up the Church of God. Even as it was with *Pharaoh*, when he called a counsel to deal craftily with the *Israelites*, to oppress and diminish them, then they were the more multiplied. Thus *Act. 12. 24.* when *Herod* set himself to kill the eminent servants of the Lord, and thereby weaken the Church of God: for when the shepherds were dissipated, what would become of the flock? it is said, *But the word of God grew and multiplied.* See how the contrary fell out to *Herods* design.

What is the general good promoted by the Churches sufferings.

1. The glory of God, Christ, and believers.

2. The propagation and enlargement of the Gospel.

These things premised, Let us consider, *What is the general good promoted by the Churches sufferings.* And

1. *Hereby the glory of God and Christ is the more exalted amongst all that fear him.* For when the Churches of God shall see the wisdom and goodness of God thus to his people, turning all the cruelty and craft of their adversaries to their own good, that what they could never do, their enemies do for them: What glory and praise doth this cause in all Congregations? How is the Church endeared hereby to God, to trust in him, to continue faithful to him in all exercises? God hath been good and will be good. God hath turned the greatest evil of men to the greatest advantage, and he will do it. As Christ's death is called a *glorifying of him*: Thus also are the sufferings for Christ, the *believers glory*, and not only so, but the *glory of Christ* also. What saith *Paul*, *Phil. 1. 20.* *Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or death.* But

2. The great good overflowing to the Church by its sufferings, *are the propagation and enlargement of the Gospel thereby.* *Phil. 1. 13.* *Paul* there sheweth, how his troubles fell out to the furtherance of the Gospel; for his bonds were made manifest in *Caesars palace*, and in all other places. That of *Tertullian* is known, *The blood of Martyrs is the seed of the Church.* When men did behold their faith, their patience, their constancy and courage, it made them enquire into the cause of their sufferings, what it was that could make them so constantly endure all kind of torments; In so much that this was in stead of the working of miracles, to bring men to faith. So that as the shaking of a ripe flower maketh many seeds fall to the ground, and in stead of that one flower many come up in the room of it: or as when the Vine hath its branches cut off, there come farre more in stead thereof. Thus it hath also been by all the troubles on the Church of God, by afflictions, and by patience under them. How numerous did the Church of God grow, even like the stars in Heaven?

Let the Use be, To consider those examples of all such worthies, who have suffered for Christ, whether recorded in Scripture, or in Ecclesiastical History, read them for thy comfort and thy salvation. The word of God, and the lives of Martyrs bearing witness to it, may much prevail over a stony heart. It hath been a good blessing of God, that the Names and Histories of most Martyrs have been preserved and recorded for the good of the Church of God to come. The lives and sufferings of our Martyrs here in *England*, what influence may they not make upon thee? What patience, what heavenly mindedness, what courage should this put into thee? As *Abel* though dead speaketh: Thus do all the godly Martyrs, the *Bradfords*, the *Ridleys*, the *Latimers*, they all speak still; and God suffereth such persecutions to be as perpetual Sermons to teach us,





S E R M. LI.

*The Afflictions which others suffer for Christ, make much for our Comfort and Salvation.*

2 COR. I. 6.

*And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation.*

THE second particular in this Text, as it stands divided, is the *Consequent* or *Effect* of this tribulation; which is set down in a particular and special manner above any other fruit of it, and that is two-fold, *Consolation* and *Salvation*. Of the word *Consolation* enough hath already been said. For the other, *viz. Salvation*, we shall remit it to the end of the verse, where it is again specified. So that our work is immediately to proceed to the *Observation*, which is,

*That sufferings for Christ should be so farre from disheartning, and offending others, that a true and right consideration of them, may much provoke our comfort and salvation.*

Sufferings for Christ help much our comfort and salvation.

This truth is of great use. For the afflictions accompanying the wayes of Christ, have been an offence, and a stumbling block to many. Now when a curb shall be made a spur, when an hinderance, a furtherance; and we shall be encouraged from those particulars which should drive back, this consideration must be very profitable.

Before we come to amplify in what manner, in what respects persecutions are made thus serviceable to others, Let us take notice,

First, *That the sufferings of others do work good only occasionally, or by way of example.* We must not conceive any merit or causality (as was declared before) in *Martyrs*; They are Examples, not Mediators; Their light did shine that we might thereby glorifie God. So that we must take heed that the sufferings of the godly do not obscure the sufferings of Christ, that they should not be accounted the only treasure of Christ. But as *Luther* was afraid, lest his books should take men off from meditating on the Bible: Or as *Paul* was afraid men should judge of him, as if he by his own power had done that miracle; and therefore told them, *It was onely by the Name of Christ*. So also it was with all the true *Martyrs* of Christ, they were humble, looking upon themselves as unworthy of the name of a *Martyr*; neither would they have their blood derogate from the blood of Christ. Hence

1. The sufferings of others work good only occasionally, not efficiently or meritoriously.

Secondly, *We may greatly deplore and bewail the Apostasie of the Church concerning those that were Martyrs and sufferers for Christ: in what superstition and sinfull devotion were they plunged in about them?* So that their sufferings were not for the salvation, but the destruction of many, through the

2. Hence we may bewail the superstition of the Church about the Martyrs.

Ginne



finne and indiscretion of after ages. It is true, there is a lawfull and due honouring of God for his graces bestowed on those Worthies; yet they were but the pens, Gods Spirit was the ready writer; they were but the vessels God poured that curious ointment in them. It was not they so much as God in and by them; for they were men like us, subject to carnal and worldly fears; they were reeds of themselves ready to be shaken by every wind, but God established them. So that it is our duty to blesse God, who gave such power and grace to men; yea and we are in a civil way to honour and love them, to desire to imitate them, to make them examples for us to follow. If the Papists had gone no further, we and they should have been at concord in this point; but from imitation they fall to adoration: And although they heap up as many distinctions, as *Samson* did men by his slaughter, *Heap upon heap*, to clear themselves in this matter, yet it is but *vitreum acumen*, these glasses are quickly broken. That the name of such who suffer for Christ should be like a precious ointment, and an honourable esteem of them be had alwayes in the Church, none can deny. Therefore those moral respects vouchsafed to them in the primitive times are not to be blamed; as the regarding of the judgement of a Martyr, as much or more than any Bishop or Doctor. As also when any had fallen by infirmity in times of persecution; such repenting did first go to the Confessours in prisons that were *Candidates*, or designed *Martyrs*, intreating their favour, and desiring liberty of admission into Church-communion from them, which the Church received, they making publick satisfaction in respect of scandal by serious humiliation; but this afterwards began to be greatly abused, and *Cyprian* complaineth of it; therefore it was at last justly abrogated, howsoever such respects as were meerly moral, are to be allowed; but for religious considerations to do any thing to them that is unjustifiable. A learned man thinketh, that the Prophecy spoken of by *Peter*, 2 Tim. 4. 1. which tels of an *Apostasie*, *bringing in Doctrines of daimons*, as he explains it, is the worshipping of these Saints departed; and that this was the great Apostasie of the Church. Whether that be the intent of the holy Ghost, is not here to be disputed. Certainly there was great Apostasie in the Church from primitive simplicity, when they began to worship such who had been Martyrs; yea their reliques they would in a religious manner preserve and adore praying also unto them, and expecting both soul-mercies and body-mercies from them. Here this wine did begin to turn into vinegar, and contrary to Christ, they turned wine into water; that which was only for example and imitation, they turned to Adoration and worship, wherein they did not only derogate from the glory due to Christ; but even those Confessors and glorious Martyrs themselves, were they corporally present, would with *Paul* and *Barnabas* rend their cloaths, and refuse such worship. Certainly if the Angel did forbid *John* from worshipping him, saying, *He was his fellow-servant, and therefore he must worship God*: How much more would the Martyrs, who were subject to like passions as we are. Though therefore the godly are afflicted and persecuted for our comfort and salvation, yet take heed of superstitious excesse about them, turning imitation into religious adoration.

3. The sufferers for Christ may encourage us, but we are to be sure they are indeed the sufferers for Christ.

Thirdly, *Those that suffer may be very usefull to encourage us, but then we must be sure they be such, who do indeed suffer for Christ.* For no doubt all those who have suffered in any false way, The Heretick for his heresies, the Papist for his Idolatry and superstition, have greatly confirmed those that were of that perswasion. They did greatly comfort and animate others that did believe them to be the true Martyrs of Christ. So that we may say of such, contrary to that in the Text, *They are afflicted for the destruction and damnation of others.* Others are hardened in their Idolatries and Heresies by their sufferings. Look we then, that we do propound right patterns to our selves, that we be not deceived,



as sometimes in Popery they have worshipped the bone of an Ass or an horse for a Saints relique; for the Devil hath his *Martyrs*, Heresie hath her *Martyrs*; yea vain-glory hath had many *Martyrs*. And *Austin* saith, *It is possible for a man who dieth for the truth, yet to have no other motive but vain-glory.* The Apostle affirmeth it also, 1 Cor. 13. when he supposeth a man may give his body to be burnt, and yet for want of charity be a tinkling cymbal, or it will profit him nothing. This is so secret a sinne, and we are so prone to it, that the *Heathens* did charge it upon all the Christians (though falsely and maliciously) that they suffered only for vain-glory; being the more induced to think so, because the Christians did in such an excessive manner give honour and praise to them.

These things premised, let us consider how the afflictions of others for Christs cause work to our comfort and salvation.

First, *We shall have the greater assurance and perswasion of these Divine Truths upon our souls, that they are not the meer inventions of men, or delusions of our own souls.* For how can it but greatly assure us, that if this were not the truth of God, they could never have that comfort, that courage, that evidence and demonstration upon their hearts: the presence of God with them in those exquisite sufferings, do demonstrate, that the truths are of God, as well as the power and comforts to be of him. It is true indeed the meer suffering, and that with some joy, the most exquisite torments. For a religious opinion doth not presently argue, that it is a divine truth, that it hath Gods superscription upon it. For many heretical and deluded spirits have demonstrated much confidence and comfort: yet on the other side, there cannot be an external greater sign of our love to the truth, and that it is of God, then by patient suffering for it. And therefore though Hereticks die, though Papists die for their Religion, as well as the true *Martyr*, yet the frame of their spirits and concomitant dispositions are greatly different. For as their minds are corrupted with error, so also are their hearts and affections unsanctified, and therefore discover not the sweet and gracious workings of Gods Spirit upon them, as the true sufferer doth. So that it was not merely suffering, it was not merely torments, but the patience, faith and heavenly mindednesse, their love even to their very enemies, that did draw out others to love them. So that when we see others can be imprisoned, executed for such Doctrines, and they be full of an heavenly, mortified, gracious heart at that time; this must needs work in us a greater assurance of the truth, especially this doth confirm the more, when we see it is not one or two, but multitudes, yea millions, which have given testimony to such truths, and that by their blood, that so many should thus be willingly undone for that which is a falshood, is very improbable. And therefore our Divines do usually bring the constancy of *Martyrs*, as an argument to prove the divine truths of the Scriptures. Oh then shalt thou doubt? Shalt thou question, whether this or that be truth, when thou hast such presidents of so many laying down their lives to confirm it?

Secondly, *From the sufferings of others for Christ and his way, we may be greatly encouraged to trust in God, and to depend on him, to enable us also, if he should call us thereunto.* How apt are the people of God to be despondent within themselves, to be afraid of their own weaknesse and hypocrisie, saying, their hearts are so carnal, so unmortified, that they know not to part with any thing, much lesse life it self for Christ? He cannot, will one say, he dare not say with *Peter*, *Though all men forsake Christ, yet he would not*; but rather if there be any that will deny Christ, he should be the man. This temptation is very incident to the gracious heart. But if they look off from themselves to these champions before their eyes, what hope and confidence may they attain unto in the Lord? For what were those confessors of themselves? Were they

How the afflictions of others for Christ work our comfort and salvation.

1. Hereby we shall have greater assurance of these divine truths for which they suffer.

2. Hence we may be encouraged to trust in God, and depend upon him, to enable us also, if he should call us thereunto.



not men? Were they not flesh and blood as well as thou art? Were they not affected with wives, children, and life it self? Were they marble and rocks? No surely, but they were subject to all such temptations as thou art; and yet God was with them, he raised them up above their own strength. So that while thou art out of this fight, thou canst not conceive what strength, and what gracious influence God will vouchsafe unto thee. As we read of one *French Martyr* in *Fox* his *Martyrologie*, that was exceedingly possessed with fear about suffering, insomuch that he disguised himself, and took upon him to be a pedlar, carrying ware up and down; but being at last discovered, and hiding himself in a bush, no sooner was he apprehended, but as he acknowledged afterwards, as soon as ever the enemy had laid hold on him, that spirit of fear and cowardinesse left him, being filled with undaunted courage. If therefore we read the lives and deaths of those who have been persecuted for Christ, and observe what wonderfull supports they have had, and how God hath glorified himself in their infirmities: so that with *Paul* they could say, *I could do all things through Christ that strengthens me*, they did partake of a kind of Omnipotency: And at another time he saith, *When I am weak, then am I strong*. This may make thee, though a Lamb for meeknesse and innocency, yet a Lion for courage and spiritual fortitude. Hence the Apostle, when *Heb. 11.* he had illustrated in the great achievements, many worthies had accomplished by faith, at the twelfth Chapter he beginneth, *Seeing we are compassed about with such a cloud of witnesses, or Martyrs*, for so we may render it, *Let us runne the race that is set before us*. We have such a cloud of witnesses, that as the cloud did direct and guide the people of *Israel* in the wilderness; so also should the lives and examples of so many (called for that end likewise a *cloud*) guide us and teach us. Who then can be diffident, unbelieving, fearfull, when he hath such encouragements before his eyes?

3. Hereby we may take occasion to rejoyce in God, as enabling them, and as having promised to do so to us.

Thirdly, *From the consideration of such worthies suffering for Christ, we may also take occasion to rejoyce, and to be glad*. So farre should we be from shrinking and apostatizing from Christ, there are several causes of rejoycing; partly in God, blessing and praising him, who doth so much exalt himself in weak vessels. As God hath alwayes delighted to bring about the greatest glory to himself by abject and contemptible means. Thus also he doth by the sufferings of his people; that which is most unlikely, by that he magnifieth himself: and that God is seen, and made great in the world, this should mightily rejoyce us, partly, *Because we have the same God, and the same promise that they had*. And therefore wee may look to rejoyce as well as they. They have not a more mercifull or powerfull God than thou hast; neither have they more excellent or better promises than thou hast. So that as fire kindleth fire, thus their joy may produce joy in thee.

4. Hence we may inform our selves they were in earnest, and real for Christ.

Fourthly, *From the sufferings for Christs sake we may informe our selves much in this great lesson, that they were in earnest, and real for him*. It was not only words, or a profession, but a lively submission unto the wayes of Christ. That which the Scripture complaineth of so much, is the general sinne of the Christian world, *They follow Christ, because of loaves*: They professe him while the scorching heat of the Sunne doth not arise; but when once Christ and their earthly comforts cannot stand together, then they discover their unsoundnesse, and that they had no root at all. But those that suffer for Christ, they professe no more with their tongues then they manifest in their lives, *Non loquimur magna, sed vivimus*, as *Cyprian*, *We do not so much speak great things, as live them*. This was the great Objection to *Seneca*, and such moral Philosophers, that they had expressions about Virtue, but in their practice were farre from it. *Seneca* was forced to purge himself in this accusation. But neither he, nor *Socrates*, nor *Aristotle*, nor any of those Masters in Morality, could acquit themselves.

*Aristotle*



*Aristotle* that maketh *Temperance* a vertue, and that he only is temperate who doth it for virtues sake, that a virtuous man will rather die than do an evil or dishonest action, yet he kept a whore, yea and sacrificed to her, as the *Heathens* did to a goddesse. He was moved to study Philosophy by the instinct of *Pythias*, which is no more than by the command of the Devil. He was ungratefull, betrayed his Countrey, and then afterwards had a great hand in poisoning *Alexander*, which made *Caracalla* the Emperour, expell all Philosophers of *Aristotles* Sect, because of his mischief to *Alexander*. He was also exceeding covetous; for this end *Lucian* bringeth *Alexander* in hell upbraiding *Aristotle*, that therefore he made riches part of the *Summum bonum*, that under that pretext he might the rather heap up wealth; infomuch that *Laëtantius* said truly of him, *Aristoteles nec Deum coluit, nec curavit*. So that these great Moralists were like some Painters, who can draw excellent and beautifull pictures, when they themselves are foul and deformed. So that to adde action and suffering to our profession, when we are called to it, this is to shew we are Christians indeed, *Nunc incipio esse Christianus*, said *Ignatius*, when he was going to his Martyrdom.

Lally, By those that suffer we may learn to crucifie our hearts to the world, to be weaned from all comforts, not to love them more than Christ. Oh say, I find my heart so inordinate, so glewed to these dear relations I have; I find them so cleaving to my heart, that much prayer, faith and meditation cannot cast them out. What a shame is this? I look upon the Martyrs, I see wives, children, estates, goods were nothing; Christ was all, Heaven was all: Oh how unworthy am I to be compared with such glorious servants of Christ! I have not the Martyrdom of the heart, and how then can I endure that of the body?

5. Hence we may learn to mortifie our hearts to the world.



## SERM. LII.

### How Salvation is promoted and advanced by our Sufferings for Christ.

2 COR. I. 6.

Which is effectual in enduring of the same sufferings, which we also suffer.

**W**E are now come to the third particular in this Text, which is the amplification of the end specified of the Apostles sufferings, especially the latter, viz. *Salvation*, which *Salvation* is effectual. Wherein we may take notice,

1. What is attributed to *Salvation*, *et sempiternus*.
2. The manner how, *in requie*, *in enduring*; with the object of the same sufferings, *We also suffer*.

I shall at this time only consider the Attribute, or what is predicated of our



Salvation, it is *effectual*. The Greek word *ἐργαζομαι* is contested about. Some, especially *Estius* is very industrious to prove, that it should be rendred passively. Thus, *Which Salvation is wrought*. And it is true indeed among prophane Authors, the word is used *passively*; but in the New Testament in some places, it must needs be rendred *actively*. For whereas the word is used four times in the New Testament, in all which places we translate it *actively*; yet he contends for the passive sense, as *Gal. 5. 6. Faith which worketh by love, he will have it, which is wrought by love*: Whereas *Vasquez* granteth it may be rendred actively. So *Jam. 15. 16.* the *ἐργαζομαι*, we translate, *The effectual prayer*, he would have the prayer wherein the Spirit of God doth so powerfully move us, that we are acted rather than act. Even as afterwards in the Church, those who were possessed by the Devil, were called *ἐργαζομαι*. But though in this place he may argue something probably, yet in the two other places, *Ephes. 3. 20. According to the power, τὸ ἐργαζομαι, which worketh in us.* *Col. 1. 29. Striving according to his working, τὸ ἐργαζομαι, which worketh in me mightily*: Here he cannot with any colour understand it passively. It is true, there is another word *ἐργω*, which is in the active sense used so *1 Cor. 16. 9. Heb. 4. 15.* but that doth not hinder, but that this in the middle voice may be rendred actively. Certainly though Greek Authors do not, yet the Apostle useth the verb *ἐργαζομαι*, actively, as *2 Thess. 2. 13. The Mystery of iniquity worketh*. For whereas the same *Estius* would have it passively, *It is wrought*, or is in agitation, that is no wayes probable: for *1 Thess. 2. 13. the word of God is there said ἐργαζομαι, It effectually worketh in them that believe*. So also the word is used actively *2 Cor. 4. 12. and Rom. 7. 5.* It is not then necessary that the word should be used *passively*. Hence *Erasmus* and our Translators render it *actively*, it is effectual, yet I rather joyn with those, that think it more genuine to understand it *passively* in this place, *Which salvation is wrought by patience in afflictions*. And this is consonant to other Texts, of which I shall instance in one afterwards. Certainly *Chrysostome* aggravateth the passive signification; he did not say (saith he) *ἐργαζομαι*, but *ἐργαζομαι*, yet the active sense, if it be retained, cometh to the same purpose with the passive. For the Apostle contends, that by afflictions for Christs sake, our salvation is advanced: Salvation puts forth it self, and thereby is more exalted by these sufferings, which certainly must be of unspeakable comfort, to think that by these I am the more prepared for Heaven, and my glory will the more increase. Only you must remember alwayes, that these sufferings have no causality or meritoriousness in them; it is only the gift and grace of God, hereby to increase our blessedness; for after all our sufferings, we are unprofitable servants; and might be thrown into hell. Observe,

The salvation of believers is promoted by their sufferings for Christ.

*That the salvation of believers is promoted and advanced by their sufferings for Christ.*

Let none with *Simon the Cyrenean* be compelled to bear Christs crosse; let them not grudge and repine, thinking they suffer more than Christ will ever make them amends for, that they are losers by him; for no lesse than eternal salvation is exalted hereby; thou hast gold and precious stones for parting with this earth. The Text I promised to confirm this truth, and is a parallel with mine, is *2 Cor. 4. 17.* where the Apostle sheweth the unspeakable benefit that we have by our afflictions for God, *Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a farre more, and eternal weight of glory.* It is but a light affliction; light in comparison of hell torments. Are thy sufferings like to the sufferings of the damned in hell? yet thou hast deserved them. And then light in comparison of the weight of glory. There is no proportion between



tween that everlasting blessedness, and thy afflictions: If thou shouldst for millions of years endure such torments as the *Martyrs* did, yet that was not equivalent to one hours being in Heaven. Again, he saith, *It is but for a moment.*] All thy afflictions are not eternal afflictions: Thou shalt not for ever and ever be thus in a suffering condition, compare it with eternity, *It is but a moment.* Now these afflictions thus diminished by him, do yet work for us an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Oh the goodness of God, not the merit of man, that blesteth such contemptible things with an everlasting reward! It is true, the *Papists* do most arrogantly from the word *κατασκευα* inferre, that afflictions have a causal and meritorious influence upon our salvation; that we are to abhorre such thoughts, as that we should have Heaven, *Per modum eleemosynæ*, but *coronæ*, Not by way of alms, but by way of a crown for our striving and conquering. But let men presumptuously dispute this in their Books; when they are to give up an account to God, and to stand before his barre, they will then plead mercy, and not justice; but the Word doth not signifie causality: onely that order God hath appointed; that by these sufferings we shall come to glory. And indeed to inter any causality or merit from that Word, would be plainly to derogate from the Apostles intention, which is to shew the great disproportion that is between these light afflictions; and that eternal glory, there is no equality between them; whereas if they had a meritorious causality, there must be a condign proportion between them.

But let us pursue this comfortable Doctrine. Only

First, Lay this as a foundation, that when we say, *Our salvation is promoted by afflictions*, you must not understand this, as if they of themselves did it; but it is solely by the power and grace of God. For in many Apostates, and such who had not deep rooting, sufferings did not promote their salvation, but their damnation: Even as to herbs not well rooted, the heat of the Sun doth wither them: So that some men falling into afflictions, are like noisome herbs thrown into the fire, which make the more unsavoury smell; like earthen vessels, that break in the fire. They never discover their rottenness, their love to the world, their unbelief so much, as in those times. It is true, the Apostle saith, *Rom. 5. 3. That tribulation worketh patience*: But that is not to be understood of it self; for in many it worketh impatience and unbelief; but by the power of God moving in these waters, there doth come healing. So that the presence of God, and his assistance is that alone which can turn these stones into bread. Hence also afflictions do not advance our salvation, as the Word preached doth; for that alone is properly the instrumental cause in Gods hand, both for sanctification and glorification; as afflictions are onely *occasional*, and set home by the Word. It is true, the Word it self doth not convert or save, by any inherent virtue, as the fire burneth, but by the co-operation of God with it; yet afflictions have not that efficacy, or respect in the same way, as the Word hath. By sufferings then we are as the stone by its hewing and sawing, prepared for that everlasting building in Heaven; but it is the grace and power of God that doth polish and smoothe us; otherwise through tribulations we should enter even into the kingdom of hell.

But let us examine, *Wherein these heavenly sufferings do thus carry on our salvation.* And

First, *They are a special means to humble us, to bring us low in our own eyes, to repent of all the evil we have done, and to turn unto God.* As mad men are cast into prison, kept in the dark, and under all hardship, to bring them to their mind again: Thus doth God with those that are his. So that it is an effect of his love to bring us into tribulations. It is his love, that

How sufferings advance our salvation.

1. They help to make us mourn for sin, and turn to God.



that maketh him to chastise us, *Heb. 12. O beatum cui Deus dignatur irasci.* (Tertul. lib. de patientiâ.) *O blessed is he to whom the Lord vouchsafeth to be angry!* And this is true, not onely in afflictions meerly for sinnes, but also in our sufferings for Christ. For though the motive be thy faithfulness in owning of Christ and his way, though it be not for thy sinnes principally, but thy graces, that thou art thus exercised, yet God hath some respect to thy sinnes also. Therefore such tribulations they are of a mixed consideration, thy gracious love to Christ provoketh the adversary, yet thy sinnes also God looketh at in this fiery tryal to purge them away. Hence *1 Pet. 4: 16, 17.* the Apostle encouraging believers to suffer as Christians, and that by many arguments, he bringeth one amongst the rest, that relateth to their sinnes, *For judgement must begin at the house of God.* These persecutions he calls them judgements, and that in respect of the godly, which denoteth, That although God did honour them, as suffering for his truth, yet he did also judge them in those sufferings for their sinnes. It is then the duty of all Champions and sufferers for Christ, as to rejoyce, because they are accounted worthy to suffer for him: So also by those tribulations to humble themselves, to condemn and judge every sinne that they can discover. It is a false and sinfull opinion of some, mentioned by *Raynardus* (*Lib. de Martyrio.*) that affirmed, *Whosoever did suffer for the faith of Christ, his very Martyrdome was enough to cleanse him; so that he was not bound in, or before his sufferings to repent for such sinnes, as his conscience might re-mind him of.* No, were it possible for a man to give his body to be burnt for the truth, and yet not to mourn for, and bewail the sinnes he was guilty of, such Martyrdome would not profit him. So that as God commands the *Israelites*, when they went to warre, that they should cleanse the Camp of unclean things: Thus also all those who suffer for Christ, and in some sense may be said to fight the battels of the Lord, it is their duty to arraigne themselves for their sinnes, and to pray, That this washing of them, may take away their spots and filthinesse.

2. They inform us more of God, and Christ, of his grace and power then we knew before.

Secondly, These afflictions for Christ, do much promote our salvation, *Because they are a School to every believer, whereby to know more of God and Christ, of his grace and power then ever they did before.* These sufferings lead us into much experimental knowledge of God, and his wayes. These see the wonders of God in the depths. A man not afflicted knoweth not what the experiences are that usually the godly find in such exercises. Hence as *David* acknowledged, *Psal. 119. Before he was afflicted, he went astray.* Those afflictions did him more good than his mercies. Thus also the godly, who as *Joh*, come like gold out of the fire, they can truly say, They would not be without those teachings, those experiences they have had, not for all the world: especially this they are experimentally to observe, *How the power of God, as Paul speaketh, was perfect in his infirmities;* that the more his troubles did grow, the more were the supports and comforts of God: Inasmuch that the afflicted soul wondereth, and is amazed to see and feel the presence and power of God with it: It hath that comfort, that courage, which it thought had been impossible for him ever to enjoy. For (as formerly you heard) as afflictions abound, so also do consolations and supports. So that you must not expect God should give such extraordinary discoveries of himself, but in extraordinary cases: As we read of a notable instance of a woman Martyr in the primitive Heathenish persecutions, who being great with child, was delivered the day before she was to suffer, and in her travail sending forth great and grievous groans: The Jailor reproved her, saying, That if she did  
thus



thus cry out about the bringing forth of a child, how would she be able to suffer a cruel and tormenting death? To whom she well replied, *That her present exercise was natural and ordinary, and therefore expected but common supply in that case, whereas her Martyrdome was extraordinary, and therefore looked for extraordinary help and comfort from God.* This is to shew, That the discoveries we have in our exercises and troubles under the unusual presence, and consolations of God, make us to say with Job, *They had heard of God with the ear, but now they see him with the eye.* They did but know in a riddle, now they do (as it were) face to face.

Thirdly, *These afflictions do promote and quicken to more grace, and more grace will have more glory.* In these trials and heavenly conflicts, their faith, their patience, their crucified affections to the world are more increased. As Grapes in the wine-press send forth juice and sweetnesse: As fragrant Herbes in the fire, send forth a sweeter smell: The Frankincense needeth fire to make it more refreshing: In the race a man puts forth his swiftnesse: In the fight, fortitude and valour is more manifested: Natural exercise increaseth the health of the body: So also doth spiritual, the health and graces of the soul. Seeing then that these afflictions heat thy soul seven times hotter than they were before, seeing they make thy five to gain ten: No wonder if our salvation be exalted by them.

2. These afflictions quicken us to more grace.

Lastly, Our salvation is advanced by these sufferings, *Because of the glorious promises which are made to such.* Some indeed have doubted, Whether there be Degrees of Glory or no in Heaven? But that may be fully proved, that those Starres in Heaven doe differ from one another in Glory. And certainly, those that suffer more, shall have greater Glory. Inasmuch that some learned men have concluded from Revel. 20. 4, 5. That the *Martyrs* onely shall have a peculiar Glory bestowed on them to reign with Christ a thousand yeares here on Earth. But that being not so clear, we may firmly conclude, That if a drop of cold water be given for Christs sake, will be so greatly rewarded, How much more many drops of their owne warme blood? Doe not then repine under temporal losses for Christ; it is abundantly made up spiritually here, and will be eternally hereafter.

4. Because of the glorious promises which are made to such.





## SERM. LIII.

*Afflictions not in themselves, but as improved by Patience, conduce to our Salvation: What goes to the producing of Patience.*

2 COR. 1. 6.

*Which is effectual in enduring of the same afflictions, which we also suffer.*

**T**He second part considerable in this amplification of the divine advantage and heavenly profit we have by afflictions for Gods cause, is the manner; how this salvation is promoted, and that is *ἐν ὑπομονῇ*, *In the enduring, or in patience under sufferings*. It is not simply and barely sufferings, for murderers suffer, robbers suffer; but it must be for God; there must be a good cause. And yet further, a good cause is not enough; there must be an humble, patient and meek deportment in those that do suffer. For if they suffer with grudging and repining, thinking God is a severe Master, who imposeth such hard tasks upon them, then they lose their reward; neither is salvation advanced hereby. The Greek word *ὑπομονή*, is translated sometimes *tolerantia*, *enduring*; and thus in the Text: Even as the Verb *ὑπομένω*, is sometimes *Matth. 10. 22. Heb. 12. 3.* But for the most part it is rendred *patientia*, *patience*. Thus *Luk. 21. 19. Rom. 5. 3.* It is also taken by some for *perseverance* and *constancy*; so that is explained, *Heb. 12. 1; Let us runne δι' ὑπομονῆς*, *with patience*, we render it, or rather with *perseverance and constancy*, *that we faint not*, or be weary, ere we come to the end of our race. Although therefore many other graces are necessarily required to go through afflictions; so that our salvation may be exalted thereby, yet the Apostle here, and in many other places, instanceth *ὑπομονή*, *patience*, as that which is the most proper and genuine grace for the improving of our sufferings. Therefore from hence observe,

Sufferings not barely in themselves, but as improved by patience, conduce to our salvation.

*That sufferings not barely of themselves, but as improved by patience, do conduce to our salvation.*

Without *patience* our corruptions, and our damnation is furthered by all the tribulations we groan under. So that *patience* is like the salt to season this Sacrifice, that it may be acceptable. If we struggle and strive against God, complain plain and murmur, because we meet with such hardship, this depriveth us of our glory. We are not to be like the Sacrifice, that did struggle and strive, and therefore must be bound to the Altar; but we are to deny ourselves, to take up the crosse (which argueth voluntariness and readiness) and then we must follow him. Holy obedience must accompany this bearing of the crosse, *Luk. 9. 23.* yea it is added, *He must take it up daily*; implying, that though this crosse be put upon thy shoulders every day; though it be from week to week, from year to year, thou



thou must not repine, but take it up daily. You must not carry the cross of Christ, as the *Philistims* heifers did the Ark, lowing as they went for their young ones; where *patience* is, there is also a quiet, meek and ready resignation of our selves, even as was in Christ, *Behold I come to do thy will, O God*; which will of God was partly to suffer most dreadfull things to flesh and blood. Contraniteny then and contrapugnancy to the will of God, bringing tribulations upon us, doth deprive us of all that soul-saving benefit we might have by them. It is true indeed, there is a conditional will in every sufferer for Christ, arising necessarily from nature within us, which desireth to preserve it self; and by this we would deprecate that cup which God is giving us to drink. Even Christ himself in this conditional manner prayed, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup passe away from me*; but then with their absolute will, they do submit and say, *Not our will, but the will of God be done*. Thus we have a notable expression, *John* 21. 18. where Christ speaking of the death and martyrdom *Peter* should suffer for his name, he saith, *Another shall gird thee, and carry thee whether thou wouldst not*; not that *Peter* suffered against his will absolutely, not that he repined at it, but rather rejoiced in it, only it was against his conditional will; nature of it self would have desired rather freedom from those torments.

But let us proceed to enquire into the Nature or Properties of this *Patience*; and I shall not enlarge my self on this subject in this place, because it will come in more expressly and explicitly some where else.

1. Therefore take we notice, *That although humane Philosophers by their several Sects did greatly oppose one another, yet they did agree in the commending of patience*. Indeed *Aristotle* doth not reckon *patience* nor *humility* amongst the moral virtues; but the *Stoicks* especially, they did so commend *patience*, as that thereby they would have a man turned into a meer stone (as it were) and an unnatural dedolency; but no *Philosophical patience*, not that of *Anaxarchus* (who cried out so stoutly to the Tyrant, who caused him to be brayed and pounced to death, *Tunde, tunde Anaxarchum non tundis.*) or of others so greatly applauded by humane Writers, is worthy of the name of Christian patience. There is a vast difference in the principles, in the end, in the effects, in the concomitants, as might be shewed; but I shall not dilate at this time. This particular is brought in, to make us examine, What is the grace of patience, and what may be *Natural* or *Moral Patience*. *Natural Patience* I call that, which cometh much from the constitution and complexion of their bodies, they are more mild, quiet and enduring of grief than others. *Moral patience* I call that, when men by wisdom and reading of moral precepts can harden themselves heroically to bear the tribulations upon them; but *Christian patience* is that which comes from a regenerated and sanctified nature, eying Gods glory, his will and command only, not regarding other sinister respects. So that a *Natural Patience*, a *Moral Patience* under thy sufferings, will not advance thy salvation, but that which is Christian. You have a notable place for this *2 Pet.* 1. 6. *To patience, godlinesse*. The Apostle doth there exhort to have the chain of graces linked together, not to think it enough to have one grace, unless he have all. And therefore *patience* must be added to *temperance*; for that requireth the denial of our pleasures, the crucifying of our delights, which cannot be without patience: but then to this *patience* we must adde *godlinesse*, implying, that though we be never so meek, so still, so Lamb-like under our troubles; yet if godliness be not added to this patient deportment, if it be not from divine principles, and to divine ends, then our patience is greatly defective. Look we therefore that when we quietly and patiently suffer, it came from the grace of patience, not from a counterfeit patience, for this is not true gold, and so will not enrich us.

This distinction being premised, whereby a Christian may be enabled to know when it is Nature, and when it is Grace that doth bear; when flesh and blood

Humane Philosophers agreed in the commending of patience.



doth suffer, and when a divine Nature within him. In the next place, let us consider, What goeth to the producing of this grace of patience; for we cannot of our selves perform this duty of patience no more than a wilderneffe can bringforth roses. Therefore

What goeth  
to the produ-  
cing of pati-  
ence.  
1. The efficient  
cause is God.

First, *The efficient cause of patience is God only.* The heart of man under any afflictions is like a wild bull in a net, there is nothing but raging and repining under every exercise, till God give a patient spirit. Hence *Rom. 15. 5.* he is called, *The God of patience*: For what a wild unruly bedlam is an unsanctified man under any pressure upon him: Like *Cain* he crieth out, *It is greater than he can bear.* Like *Jobs* wife, he is tempted to curse God, and so die. Dost thou therefore under thy trials, want patience? Doth it grieve and sadly afflict thee, to see thy self so passionate, so impassionate? Then let this make thee to run to the throne of grace, improve this title, *God is the God of patience*: Say, Oh God, it is but speaking the word, it is but saying, Let there be patience, and there will be patience! How often have I resolved for patience? How often prayed for patience, and yet Lord my heart is tormented and tossed up and down, like that Lunatick, which could not be bound by any chains? Not only my tongue, but my heart are worse than unruly and savage beasts they may be tamed; but this, no man, only God can tame it. It's God only therefore that maketh in us patience: The grace of patience is larre above our power. *Tertullian* wrote a Book of *Patience*, but in the very beginning he apologizeth for himself, why he should write of that subject, which he had so little experimentally and practically attained unto, and he excuseth it thus, *That he doth as those who are sick, they delight to be talking and praising of health: So I (saith he) who am Ager caloribus impatientia, sick with feavorish impatient heats, do delight to write of patience.* Thus do thou, seeing it is more then of thy self thou art able to do. The least tryal, the least affliction, is ready to heat thee with impatience; pray to God importunately, let him not alone, till he bleffe thee with this composed patient spirit. Say with the same *Tertullian*, *Pereat seculum dummodo patientiam lucrifaciam*, Let the whole world perish, so that God will give me patience.

2. The word  
of God is the  
instrumental  
cause.

Secondly, As God is the efficient cause, so the word of God that is instrumental. The Word is like *Dauids* harp to drive out this evil spirit. So the Apostle, *Rom. 15. 14.* *That we through patience of the Scriptures might have hope.* When thy impatient flesh doth suggest this, and that argument to discontent and repining, Oh remember what the word of God saith! It is for want of Scripture-consideration, of Scripture-arguments that thy heart is so clamorous and unruly; such a command, such a promise would presently have made all calm and quiet. The *Heathen* adviseth an angry furious man to look in the glasse, while he is in those passionate fits, that he may see how deformed he is made thereby; but how much rather, when thy heart hath boiled over with impatient repining thoughts, art thou to recover thy self immediately, and to look into the Word? See what that saith, what that requireth, and then thou wilt be ashamed, and abhorring thy self as a very beast.

3. Afflictions  
they also work  
patience.

Thirdly, *Afflictions themselves according to Scripture-expression, they work patience also.* Thus *Rom. 5. 3.* *Tribulation worketh patience.* *Jam. 1. 3.* *The trying of your faith worketh patience.* Here you see afflictions are said to work patience, but not of themselves, it's the power of God in and through them; only as the beast accustomed to the yoke is more tame than at first; so when we are constantly exercised with afflictions that they seem to be no new thing, then through Gods grace, we come to be more ready and willing in a patient enduring of them. It is said of Christ himself, *He learned obedience by the things which he suffered,* *Heb. 5. 8.* not that he could grow properly in grace, or be more obedient than he had been formerly; but it is spoken in regard of experimental obedience, he had the sense and feeling of it more than before: but the adopted sons of God, they



they do increase in obedience and patience by the things that they suffer. Therefore thou who hast more afflictions than others, it is a reproach to thee, if they have not taught thee more patience and meekness than others.

Fourthly, *The exemplary or ideal cause of patience, is God and Christ.* From them we have a most exact and compleat rule of patience, *Mat. 5. 48. Be ye therefore perfect, as your heavenly Father is.* To be perfect is there to be patient, for he had before instanced in the patience of God, that even to the unjust he causeth the sunne to arise; and from this inferreth, Be ye therefore perfect: To be patient, and that to enemies, may be called *perfection*, because this alone is taught in Christianity. To love our friends is acknowledged a duty by all Nations, but to love enemies is only professed by Christians. Well then may we be patient under all the persecutions, reproaches and vexations the enemies of God bring upon us: For is not God patient towards them, and yet they are more his enemies then thine? He that could immediately be avenged on them; he that could command legions of Devils to drag them to hell presently, yet with much patience suffereth them. God is so patient, that as *Tertullian*, *Ipsa sibi detrahit*, (i. de pat.) *His patience detracteth from him, he seemeth to be a loser by it.* For people sinne the more obstinately and wilfully, because they meet with impunity. *Because vengeance is not speedily executed, therefore the heart of the wicked is encouraged to evil*, Eccles. 8. 11. It is true indeed, if we speak properly we cannot attribute the Greek word *πασις* to God, as if that were an attribute in him. The Scripture useth other words *πασις*, *χαρις* and *ἀνδρα*, but never *πασις*, because God being most absolutely blessed and happy in himself, he cannot be under any misery: So as to be said *πασις*, to be patient under it: neither can God be said to *pasi*, to suffer, in a passive sense, yet his goodness, his forbearance, these are called *patience*. And from the *patience* of God we may be encouraged to a conformity thereunto. Should God be as impatient of thee, should he as little endure thy failings, as thou canst his dispensations, thou hadst been with *Dives*, calling for a drop of water long before this time, and not able to partake of it. Christ also is a wonderfull examplar cause of patience, for him to lay aside the manifestation of his glory, to be born of a Virgin, to be exposed to such an ignominious death: in all which he did seem, as *Tertullian* expresseth it, *Contumeliosus sibi ipsi, Injurious and reproachfull to himself*; which made the *Marcionites* say, He had only a phantastical body, thinking it a reproachfull and dishonourable thing to him, to have a true real body of the Virgin *Mary*. But this exinanition and emptying of himself, doth the more commend and make his patience illustrious. Hence *1 Pet. 2. 23.* and in other places, Christ is commended as a pattern to us of *patience in all our sufferings*; and certain never may we more shame and abhorre our selves for all our repining and impatient workings of soul, then when we set Christ before our eyes; he was as a sheep in the hands of the shearer that opened not his mouth: Yet how much did he suffer both from God and man, and that without any cause in respect of himself, though justly in respect of Gods Covenant with him, as our Surety. Now though all this was for us enemies to him, such who would contemn his love, and be ready to crucifie him over and over again, yet in these great agonies and unspeakable sufferings, he is not impatient. Thus we have heard of a *patience* greater than that of *Job*, even of *Christ* himself, and let his patience shame thee out of thy impatience.

4. God and Christ are the exemplary cause.





## S E R M, L I V.

*Motives exciting us to a patient Submission unto God under all the Afflictions he layes upon us.*

2 C O R. I. 6.

*Which is effectual in enduring of the same sufferings, which we also suffer.*

**W**E are yet treating on the manner, How the Salvation of believers is promoted by their sufferings, which is said to be *ἐν ὑπομονῇ*, *In enduring or in patience; in a patient enduring.* It is not my purpose (I told you) to enlarge my self according as this Subject of *patience* might require. Some things have been spoken to declare the nature of it; I shall adde at this time some motives and encouragements to be *patient* under the most extream sufferings we are put upon. And

Motives to patience.

1. We should consider and be affected with what we have deserved

First, This consideration may greatly calm and compose our spirits, *If we sensibly affect our selves with what we have deserved.* All-impaciency and turbulency of heart ariseth, because we are not thoroughly humbled under our own guilt and unworthinesse; for if this were taken notice of, we would wonder, why dogs should have childrens bread, why we should have the least drop of mercy, who deserve the deluge of Gods wrath. Dost thou at any time find repinings and frettings of heart within thee? Do thou presently possess thy soul with thy wretchednesse and unworthinesse: Say, Who am I Lord, that it is no worse? This is not hell, nor everlasting damnation that I am in, and yet I have a thousand times over deserved that. It was this that quieted *David's* heart under that sour affliction he conflicted with, when *Absolom* had made such a strong conspiracy against him, 2 Sam. 16. 11. when *Shimei* cursed him with such a grievous curse, that *Abishai* had no patience to bear it, *Why should this dead dog curse my Lord the King* (saith he) *let me go and take off his head?* Who but a *David* would have been avenged? But what tameth *David's* heart? *Let him alone, let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him.* *David* knew that it was for his sins that *Absolom* rebelled, *Shimei* cursed; and therefore he dare not grudge nor mutter. So 2 Sam. 15. 26. while *David* is compassed about with the same difficulties; see how soft his heart is, ready to receive any impression; *But if he say, I have no delight in him, behold here I am, let him do to me, as seemeth good to him.* Thus *David's* heart is like the vessel cast into the fire, it may be put into any form, or fashion; and what is the reason of it? A true humbled spirit under all its unworthinesse. Thus the Church *Lament.* 3. 22. though she be in such desolations, that she calls to all the passengers who come by, to see if there were ever any affliction like hers, yet (saith she) *It is of the*



*the Lords mercies that we are not consumed:* As wretched as we are, we might be worse. It is the Lords mercy that we do but taste of his cup of wrath, that we do not drink up the dregs. Here is a good patern to write after. Let thy troubles and exercises be like *Nebuchadnezzars* furnace, heated seven times hotter then ordinary, yet thou wilt have cause to say, if thou regard thy own guilt, *It is of the Lords mercy, that it is no worse.* And *vers. 39.* Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Art thou a living man not a damned man, and doest thou complain? Think, what if thy condition were like those that are chained up in everlasting darkness, gnashing their teeth, and roaring out for the endlesse torments that are upon them? Wouldst thou not then judge this condition thou art in, though afflicted and troublesome, to be a mercy? Certainly if the damned in hell are bound to acknowledge the justice of God, and to give him the glory thereof, though it be in their confusion; How much rather art thou bound to give God the glory of all his Attributes in these dispensations to thee, though bitter to flesh and blood? Take heed then of being like *Jonah*, of saying, *Thou doest well to be angry.* It is an ease to pour forth thy complaints. For what doth God do thee any wrong? Doth not the worm that eateth up all thy comfort breed in thy own breast? Is not thy destruction from thy own self? Certainly if anything, this may stop thy mouth, and quietly compose thy soul. But

Secondly, Not only the apprehension of thy guilt may thus rebuke all storms within thee, *But the consideration of Gods goodnesse and mercy is admirable, that doth thus alter and change the nature of these afflictions that are upon thee.* For whereas thou mightst have been suffering for thy sinnes, thou now sufferest for God and a good cause. Whereas they might have been a curse, now they are made a blessing, whereas they might have administred all sorrow and bitterness, now thou art to account it all joy, when thou fallest into divers temptations; give not over sucking of this honey-comb, till thou hast got all the sweetnesse out of it; God maketh this crown of thorns, a crown of gold; That which might have been a stone is turned into bread; The fruit of thy sinne is made a priviledge and an honour: Hence the godly have alwayes looked upon their sufferings, as a blessed thing, as eminent expressions of Gods love to them: Hence in all their troubles they have been more prepared and purified to blesse God: As *Bel's* cast into the fire, do afterwards make a sweeter and clearer sound; so that this is encouragement enough, to consider how God changeth the nature of these troubles, the fruit of sinne is made the fruit of Gods love to thee, and also of righteousnesse to thy self.

Thirdly, Be not dejected under sufferings for God, but rejoyce with patience, *Because God will be with thee, thou shalt have the presence and assistance of Christ, and then Christ being in the ship with thee, thou canst not suffer shipwreck.* *Paul* speaking of that admirable and strong constitution of grace, whereby he was able to endure heats and cold, he could abound, and he could want, be changed from one extream condition to another, and yet be the same in heart and affection, he addeth, *He can do all things through Christ that strengthneth him,* *Phil. 4. 13.* Thou hast the same power with Christ in some sense; what he can do thou canst do: as a little child inabled by a Gyant, can do what the Gyant can do. I can do all things; *Paul* hath a kind of Omnipotency. If then the troubles thou art to combat with were too strong for thee, such as would overwhelm thee, then thou mightst be impatient and discontented, but be quiet and wait for the power of God. See also how notably *Paul* speaketh to this, *2 Cor. 12. 10.* I take pleasure in my infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, *For when I am weak, then am I strong.* And *vers. 9.* Gods strength is said to be perfected in *Pauls* weaknesse: most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest on me. What wonders and paradoxes,

2. Consider Gods great goodnes in changing the nature of thy afflictions.

3. Consider that God will be with thee.



paradoxes doth *Paul* speak? His words are miracles, he will most gladly glory and rejoyce in all his reproaches; and why? Because hereby Gods power will be the more manifested. Thus you see great ground for patience, because Gods power will come in, and that very seasonably you will have grace to help in time of need, Heb. 4. 16. The *Pythagoreans* called God, *Ipsam opportunitatem*, Opportunity it self, because he did alwayes come in seasonably to help: How much more may Christians put torch their patience and faith in this particular? Thou art sure to have his gracious power and assistance, and thou art sure also to have it in the best season, and most opportunely. Let not then impatience so trouble the waters of affliction, and bemud them, that thou canst not see the face of God shining upon thee, and his arm stretched out to help and deliver thee.

4. Consider what good will redound to thee by thy afflictions.

Fourthly, As you have need of patience under these exercises, *So let it have its perfect work, because of the unspeakable good that will redound to thee hereby.* If this be duly weighed, thou wilt bless God for thy sufferings more than for all thy mercies and outward safety; thou wilt see, that to lose father, and mother, and life it self, is to winne them. God doth by these sufferings bring in *Novum & inauditum modum salutis, interire ne pereas*, a new and unheard of way of safety, by making thee to die, that thou mayest not perish. We might heap up many places of Scripture that demonstrate the benefit of such sufferings. So that the opinion of the *Gnosticks*, which *Tertullian* confuteth, was directly opposite to Scripture. It seemeth the *Gnostick* was an hater of *Martyrdome*, and accused Christ of severity and cruelty for requiring such things at the hand of his followers; he thought Christ was injurious to his people, if he expected such hard things from them; but this made them charge Christ thus foolishly, because they did not consider that those sufferings were advantages, that it was no more a losse to the godly, then it is to the grains of corn, when thrown into the earth, and die (as it were) there; unlesse you do so to the corn, it cannot bring forth fruit. Thus the godly, except they are thus afflicted, except they have these tryals, they are great losers, and that in a two-fold respect. For

1. What spiritual good.

1. *Their spiritual good is promoted by the patient enduring of afflictions.* Our Saviour calls it; *John 15. The purging of the Vine*; that as the cutting of the luxuriant branches do not hinder, but increase the fruit thereof: Thus also do these tribulations, they are like razors to cut off all superfluities; and therefore compared so often to the fire, which doth consume the drossie, and make gold more purified. Art thou then impatient, because God taketh away thy corruptions from thee, because he applieth such remedies that will kill thy lusts, and make thee more believing, and more heavenly minded? Do you not see the diseased person under the Physicians care, though for the present under austere remedies? The person complains, and cries out, yet afterwards, when by this means he cometh to perfect health, then he thanketh the Physician, and rewards him. Now all thy afflictions and tribulations for Gods cause are medicinal: It is God the wise Physician, that commandeth thee to be thus let blood: Fear not therefore, neither faint under it; this is the way God taketh to sanctifie and cleanse thy soul; this winnowing will deliver thee from thy chaff; these bitter pills will kill those worms of pride, vain-glory, and other lusts within thee.

2. Eternal.

2. It's not onely thy spiritual good here, *But thy eternal good hereafter that is promoted by these sufferings.* It's the salvation of thy soul that is interested in these troubles; so that thou art to be afraid (as it were) lest if thou art without these here, thou shalt be without salvation hereafter. Christ hath



hath promised so much to him that shall lose any thing for his sake, that it must be high Atheism not to believe it. And if thou doest believe it, and yet hadst rather have present pleasures and profits, than future glory, then thou proclaimest thy exceeding great folly and madnesse. If then thou love thy self, thy soul, thy salvation, be patient in enduring all that God layeth upon thee.

Fifthly, Be patient under such sufferings, *Because hereby thou promotest the good of others, the salvation of others.* And certainly this should much prevail with us. These sufferings of mine, these patient endurings for the cause of Christ may provoke and encourage many others. This did greatly induce *Paul*, and animate him in all his reproaches and difficulties he met with for the Gospel, because that hereby the Church was more propagated. With what joy, (*Phil. 1. 13.*) doth he speak of this? *That his bonds were made manifest every where, and many of the brethren waxed more confident and bold than before.* As on the contrary we see the impatience, worldly fears, and Apostasie of some have done a world of hurt to others, not only falling themselves, but making others also to tumble down with them. This is a sad thing to consider of. If the Apostle, *Rom. 14.* speaks so dreadfully about a strong Christian abusing his liberty, that thereby he is a stumbling block, and on his part destroyeth him for whom Christ died: How much more will this hold true on him, who shall perfidiously forsake Christ rather than suffer for him? And although some of these have recovered again, and manifested as much faithfulness as they had formerly falsehood, yet those that did wholly fall off, their fall was great, making the adversary to rejoyce, and animating others to do the like. Therefore on the contrary, if thou endure with constancy and patience under all oppositions, in nothing being dismayed, this will imbolden others; thou mayest prevent the backsliding of others. Inasmuch that to suffer for Christ is a great act of love, not only to Christ, but to the Church; when with *Paul*, we shall be willing to be sacrificed for the good of other mens souls. Now this duty of love we owe to the *Body of Christ*, we are bound in conscience to suffer reproaches, and all manner of trials for righteousness sake, not only because Christ requireth it, and with reference to him, but also out of love to the souls, and salvation of others. When we suffer, we do not only suffer as private Christians, but as members of the body; and therefore the concernment of the whole body is in the suffering of every member. This then should greatly encourage us in all our afflictions for *Christs sake*; It is not I alone, it's not my salvation only, but the salvation of many others is carried on in this business. Hence some have thought more implied in that expression than ordinarily is conceived, *1 Cor. 4. 13.* where the Apostle saith, *We are made as the filth and off-scouring of the world*; they say, the words are not to be understood only of dishonour and reproach; but because they were applied to such Sacrifices, and devoted things, in the offering whereof common judgements were removed, *piacula*; therefore they inferre, That the Apostles sufferings did conduce to the whole Church of God. Others come to obtain mercy by following them for an example. I shall not plead for this interpretation; onely this is a truth in the general, That many have been converted, and so saved by beholding the courage and patience of godly Confessors and Martyrs. It's then a duty we owe to the Church of God, to suffer when Christ requireth. And if we read of *Heathens*, the *Curtii* and *Decii*, who have devoted themselves to present death, to remove some publick calamity, what shame will this be to Christians, if they shall not in a regular way shew such zeal for the Church of God? We have a notable passage, *1 John 3. 16.* *We ought to lay*

5. Consider by patience thou maist promote the good of others



lay down our lives for the brethren; What Christ did for us, we are to do for the Church. So that from this Text it is plain, there are cases and instances wherein a man is bound to lose not only wealth and estate, but even life itself for others. Hence there is a distinction of *Martyrium charitatis*, and *Martyrium fidei*. A Jesuite (Raynardus de Martyrio.) doth industriously endeavour to maintain, *That if a man, having a call from God, doth venture his life by visiting some infected with the plague, doing this out of love to God, and peoples souls, such a man is as truly and properly a Martyr, and that in a strict sense, as one who dieth for witnessing the faith.* I shall not here examine this point; only in the general we may conclude, That he who layeth down his life for the brethren, for the spiritual good of others, having a call thereunto, he is a Martyr, and may encourage himself with all those promises, that those who died for the faith have done: Yea such a suffering and Martyrdom may be called *Martyrium fidei*, as well as *charitatis*, or *miserericordiae*; Faith having imperate acts, as well as elicit. Hence the Apostle, *Heb. 11.* attributeth divers worthy actions and achievements unto Faith. By this you see in any suffering whereby the Church of God is edified, wherein we demonstrate our love to the salvation of others, we may greatly encourage our selves. Hence also it is observed by one of the Ancients, *That he who shall suffer to prevent schisms and breaches in the Church of God, is more to be honoured, than he who suffereth, because he would not offer to an Idol, because here is more love to the Church of God.* Let this then in all sufferings, whether verbal, or real, mightily support thee, that not my own salvation onely, but the good and salvation of all those, who shall come to hear or know this, will also be furthered. To be a meanes of conversion by suffering, is in some respect greater than by preaching.



## S E R M, L V.

*All the Dispensations of God carry on, and further the Salvation of his People.*

2 C O R. I. 6.

*Or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.*

**T**He first part or member of that distribution, which the Apostle here useth hath been dispatched: For as to the last particular observed in the illustration, which the Apostle useth, *viz.* The object matter of their patient enduring, which is said to be *the same sufferings which we also suffer.* If any new matter shall present it self, it will be more fitly considered in the next verse.

I proceed therefore to the second part of the distribution used here by the Apostle; In that we may observe, The Condition supposed, *If we be comforted.*

Here



Here is light as well as darkness, Summer as well as winter. The godly are not alwayes afflicted, but they have also their seasons of comfort. It is not an impossible thing here supposed, but what God doth ordinarily bring about for those that fear him. So that in the time of adversity, thou art to remember the time of thy consolations also; whereas the people of God in their distress are apt with David to cry out, *Hath the Lord cast off for ever? Will he be gracious no more?* Thy tribulations are not eternal: After thy wilderness condition thou wilt be brought into a *Canaan*.

2. We have the effect or end of such consolations, which are vouchsafed to others, especially the Officers of the Church, who are like the mountains whose springs empty themselves into the valleys, and that is two-fold, *Consolation* and *Salvation*. Of the former enough hath been said already.

We come therefore to the latter, which is their *Salvation*, σωτηρια. We have three words in the New Testament, tending to the same, σωτηρ, a *Saviour*, thus Christ is often called; and his Name *Jesus* is, because he doth save his people; Christ is the cause of our salvation. Then there is σωτηρια, *Actual salvation*, Act. 4. 12. Yea this is applied sometimes to Christ himself metonymically. Even as in the Old Testament David doth often call God his *salvation*. Act. 13. 47. Christ is there said to be his σωτηρια, *For salvation to the ends of the earth*. Luk. 1. 69. he is called the *horn of salvation*, that is, a powerfull and strong Saviour. Lastly, There is σωτηριον, which doth not so much signifie *salvation* it self, as the means and instrument by which it is procured; and thus Christ as *Mediator* is our σωτηριον, Luke 2. 30. Luk. 3. 6. Hence Ephes. 6. 17. *The helmet of salvation*, because it's το σωτηριον, it may relate even to Christ himself; as David calleth God, his *helmet*, and his *shield*, &c.

As for the thing it self, viz. *Salvation*, that may answer the Hebrew word *Peace*, which containeth a confluence of all good things. The Heathens did so admire it, that they built a Temple *Dee Saluti*, to the Goddess *Safety*; though they understood only a temporal safety; and therefore when they were saved or delivered from dangers, they did offer their Sacrifices called *ωσες*; Thus they thought all their safety came from Heaven, though corrupted with blind minds. In the Scripture we read of a two-fold salvation: A *Temporal* one; and the Old Testament speaketh much of this salvation, because *temporal mercies* were in a more plentiful manner vouchsafed to them; not but that the godly looked for a *spiritual* salvation, as Jacob witnesseth in his benedictory prayer before his death, laying, Gen. 49. 18. *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord*; only spiritual things were not so clearly and plainly manifested, as in the Gospel times. Hence the Temple, 1 King. 6. 4. had windows indeed, but they were of narrow lights. This *Salvation temporal* is often in the Old Testament expressed in the plural number, *The salvations of the Lord*, because of the multitude and frequency of them.

2. There is a *spiritual Salvation*; and this is sometimes applied to the Gospel and means of grace, because they are instituted means to bring to *salvation*, Act. 13. 26. It's called the *Word of salvation*. 2 Cor. 6. 2. *Behold now is the day of salvation*, Heb. 2. 3. *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?* So that the very title which is given to the preaching of the Gospel, should partly much affect and winne upon us; who would not be saved? Why should not all Congregations endeavour after a godly Ministry? This is to bring in *Salvation* amongst them: And partly it should terrifie all prophane atheistical men, who delight in their lusts, and slight the Gospel preached; what is this but to refuse salvation? What is this but to say, Let me be damned, I had rather with my lusts go to hell, then without them to Heaven? Every Sermon thou despisest, *salvation* it self is rejected by thee. But then, 2. This *spiritual Salvation* is either *inchoate*, or *consummate*. *Inchoate* or *Salvation begun*, is attributed to the works of grace in this life, Sanctification, especially Justification. So Ephes. 2. 5. and 2. 8. *By grace ye are saved*; he speaks of Justification in this life, and as that which is

A two-fold salvation, temporal and spiritual.

Spiritual salvation is either inchoate or consummate.



already obtained, 2 Tim. 1. 9. *Justification is salvation begun*, though good works are otherwayes required to one and the other. The *Consummate* or *complete Salvation*, is that in Heaven, which is the *Salvation* so often promised in the Scripture, and that is the *Summum bonum*, and the *ultimus finis*, the mark all are to aim at. The Scripture doth clearly describe that, which the Philosophers did grope in the dark about, having many several opinions about it. That as our Saviour asked his Disciples, *Whom do men say I am?* And they answered, *Some John Baptist, some Elias.* Now though these were holy men, yet it was a dishonour to Christ to be accounted no more than a man; Woe be to us, if Christ had been no more than a meer Prophet. Seeing therefore these did so mistake, our Saviour asketh further, *But whom say ye that I am?* Then Peter answered, *The Same, of the living God.* It was the Father, not flesh and blood that had revealed this. Thus if you ask, What do the men of the world say *Happinesse* and *Salvation* is? One will reply, *Riches*; another, *Honours*; but what do ye say, who are more than flesh and blood, who have the Spirit of God revealing things to you? Even the enjoyment of God and Christ to all eternity, this is *Salvation*, this is *Blessednesse*. This *Salvation* is that which we are to endeavour after in our whole life. Better never have been borne, and not saved. What will it profit thee to have had a little pleasure, a little greatnesse and honour in this life, and hereafter to lose this salvation? There are some places of Scripture, wherein it's disputed, what *Salvation* is spoken of, whether *temporal* or *spiritual*, or both? 1 Pet. 3. 20. Eight persons were said to be saved in the Ark. So 1 Pet. 4. 18. *The righteous shall scarcely be saved.* The Arminian would bring that place, 1 Tim. 4. 10. *Who is the Saviour of all men*, to a spiritual salvation. But that is absurd, for he speaks of being an actual Saviour, and that cannot be to wicked men, for they are not saved, therefore it is of a *temporal preservation*; for even to wicked men he vouchsafeth daily salvations and deliverances. Now it is plain my Text speaketh of a *spiritual Salvation*, and that which is to come, called *eternal Salvation*. Observe,

God doth by all his dispensations carry on and further the salvation of his people.

*That God doth by all his dispensations carry on and further the salvation of his people.*

If others be afflicted, if others be comforted, all helpeth forward to the salvation of those that believe. In this sense it is said, 1 Cor. 3. ult. *All things are yours.* The Officers and Ministers of the Church, life and death, things present, and things to come, How are all these things a godly mans? Even because they further his salvation; by all these he promoteth the happinesse of his people. Thus Paul knew, Phil. 1. 19. that all his enemies practices, yea their preaching Christ out of envy, thinking thereby to afflict him more, yet this would all turn to his salvation. What Doctrine can be fuller of comfort than this, to consider that what ever befallerh thee, whatsoever Gods dispensations are towards thee, yet all doth advance thy salvation, thou shalt not be a loser by any thing? The people of Israel indeed they were hindred and put backwards in their journey to Canaan, being forty years detained therein, when their arrival at Canaan might have been farre sooner; but our journey to Heaven is hastened by every thing, yea our very stumblings do make us afterwards go the faster.

What this salvation doth imply.

1. It is Negative.

To open this, Consider.

First, *What this Salvation doth imply*; and therein is connoted the state and condition from which we are saved, that we were in danger of being lost in the contrary estate. Thus it is called a *Salvation*, because a man



a man by his sins was in danger of being eternally damned, and lost in soul and body for ever. Even as you see it was with *Lot*, when he was in *Sodom*, fire and brimstone was ready to consume the City; now God being mercifull to him, he sendeth an *Angel* even to pull him out. Thus it is with every one that is saved, he was in a state deserving the brimstone and fire of hell, within a little time it would have been poured upon him; but God in much mercy pulleth him out; his neighbours (it may be) they are lost, some in the same family, some of his brethren or sisters, yea it may be his parents, they are lost in this fire, and he is delivered; this is to be saved. It may also be emphatically resembled by *Noah's Ark*, when the deluge overwhelmed the whole world, there were but eight persons put into the Ark, and saved from the waters. Think in what fear and agonies the rest were, how desirous to come into the Ark; and of all mankind there were but eight preserved. Thus those who shall be saved, are but very few in comparison of those who shall eternally perish. And at the day of judgment, what praying and crying will there be, *Lord, Lord, open to us*; but they shall be commanded to *depart into everlasting fire*. So that while we are here in this life, we cannot tell what it is to be saved; we know not how to put a due esteem and prize upon it: But at the day of judgement, when the world shall be on fire, when all shall stand trembling at the barre of Gods justice; then for you to hear God call such and such an one, Come into Heaven as an Ark, come and partake of eternal glory; but to thee God shall say, Go thou cursed. Oh the unspeakable horror and confusion that will then fall on thee! What worlds wouldst thou give then to be saved? What cries and agonies wilt thou then roar out for thy salvation, but it will be denied thee? Salvation will one day be in request, and accounted a blessed and happy thing, though now it be contemned by thee, and thou thinkest thy lusts will be better then salvation to thee. In what a pathetic manner doth our Saviour represent this? *Luk. 13. from vers. 24. to 28. Many shall strive to enter in: And when the Master hath shut the door, then those that stand without shall knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us; but he shall bid them, depart, then there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac, such and such godly men received, and your selves thrust out.* Doth not our Saviour speak thus, who is truth it self? Oh imagine all these things to be now a doing! Let faith make future things present. If this consideration will not make a change in thee, what canst thou expect, but to be in the number of those, who shall for ever be denied this salvation?

Again, *Salvation* doth not only denote a Negative, a freedom from all this misery, but also a Positive, a state of glory, holinesse and happinesse, and that to all eternity. Thus it is described in Scripture by all such positive good things, that may make us readily part with all, leave all for this condition. As *Joseph* was not only saved from death, and from the prison, but advanced also to high honour and glory. Thus *Salvation* doth not only deliver from hell torments and everlasting wrath, but also doth give us possession of all holinesse and perfect blessednesse. This is the salvation God hath provided for those that fear him. No wonder if all afflictions be born patiently in expectation of this. No wonder if this be in the eye, and hope of all the godly. Were it not for this salvation, how miserable and wretched should they judge themselves? This is the salvation that we are commanded to make sure of in this life, and who would live in uncertainties about it? Is it not day and night worth the striving for? This is the salvation that every wicked man wilfully depriveth himself of. It is for this that sinne is justly called *folly* and *madnesse*; and well may it be so styled. For can there be greater sottishnesse and madnesse to put thy self from this salvation, to have the pleasures and profits of this world, which abide but for a season? No wonder if the damned in hell weep and gnash their teeth; if they have a worm always gnawing of them, a conscience always torturing and tormenting of them, because

2. Positive.



cause for a drop of honey, they are rewarded with an ocean of gall. Would the damned in hell do as they once did, if they were to live again? Have they such thoughts, such purposes, now they are roaring in those flames, which they had, while in their carnal jollity? Oh that God would persuade you about these things!

But I proceed. *This happy and blessed state is promoted, as the Doctrine informeth us, by all the dispensations which the people of God meet with.* That as passengers in a ship are still carried on to the haven, though sick and well, though waking and sleeping, yet every moment they are driven forward to their home. Thus the people of God, if afflicted, this helpeth forward to Heaven; if comforted, this also maketh for Heaven. So that let the Devil be never so busie a Lion to devour them; let the world be filled with never so many snares, yet the counsel of God cannot be frustrated. That gracious purpose of God to bring them to salvation will be effectual, and be accomplished even by those things that seem to oppose it.

Now there are two sorts of dispensations from God, which further the salvation of believers.

Two sorts of dispensations from God which further the salvation of a believer.  
1. The direct means appointed by God for this end.

1. *There are those things that are means instituted and appointed by God, and so do directly and genuinely tend to save them; and these are the Ordinances, the Ministry, the preaching of the Word, and the Sacraments.* These do in Gods way wonderfully promote the salvation of those that are rightly exercised therein. Hence you heard, that the preaching of the Gospel is called *Salvation*, because it doth so directly work thereunto; and those who fear God, do find these Ordinances very powerfull for their salvation. They are like the saws and hammers, that did prepare and polish the stones to be fit for the building. So that to be deprived of these, to be denied these, is even to be deprived or denied salvation itself: Only when we say, they are means instituted to procure salvation, You must not think there is any intrinsecal vertue in these, as the *Lutherans* speak about the Word preached; or as the *Papists* about the Sacraments, working salvation, as Physick doth health by a natural causality: No the Apostle tels us, *That in some it is not the Word of life, but of death, 2 Cor. 2. 16.* It's to some people as the *Ark* to the *Philistims*, because not used aright, it becomes their further damnation.

2. The occasional means, as

2. *There are occasional means, which do not directly, but occasionally promote the salvation of believers.* And they are,

1. Their sins.

1. *Their very finnes.* These are *Occasiones passiva*, passive occasions, meetly because sinne of it self hath such a deadly nature, that it is not ordinable to salvation; only the Omnipotency, the Wisdome and Goodnesse of God make the former finnes the godly have committed to be admirable antidotes and preservatives against future sinne. Thus *Pauls* blasphemy and persecution was overpowred to promote his salvation by making him more active. Even as one grief doth cure another sometimes, or the burning of fire is taken out by fire, which made one not afraid to say, *That he got good by his finnes, more than by his graces.* Hence *Rom. 8.* many learned men do not exclude sins themselves from that comfortable expression of the Apostle, *All things shall work together for their good.*

2. Their afflictions.

The second occasional means are *Afflictions*, and these may be called *Active occasions*, because in their nature they are ordinable and actually by God are ordained to help forward our salvation. Now the ground of all this is from Gods Predestination and Election of such to salvation; and because so elected every thing becomes instrumental to that end: so that God governeth and ruleth in all things, thereby to bring them to eternal blessednesse; for Election will obtain, and cannot be frustrated.

So that the Use may be to inform the people of God of their infinite obligation



tion to the goodnesse and grace of God towards them in this particular, if grace did fall asleep (as it were) but a moment, thy salvation might be for ever lost; but this grace that keepeth thee, doth neither slumber nor sleep. What joy and gladnesse may it fill the godly heart with, when he is allowed to say with *Paul*, *I know this shall turn to my salvation!* If I be afflicted, if I be comforted, if I have mercies, if I be without them, if I live, if I die, I know all these things shall carry on my salvation.



## SERM. LVI.

### *Of Pauls Hope and Perswasion of the Corinthians, with the Reasons and Grounds of it.*

2 COR. I. 7.

*And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.*

**T**Hese words (brought in, as some say, be a parenthesis) are by way of mitigation and mollifying the minds of the *Corinthians*: For *Paul* in his former Epistle having severely reprov'd them, it obtained good successe, and procured some spiritual effect upon them, for they were made sorrowfull thereby, and set upon the work of Reformation. And although the false Apostles had too much prevailed with them, yet they were brought to a sounder temper than formerly. Neither were *Pauls* afflictions such matter of contempt as formerly; yea they are partakers of the same sufferings with him. These things laid together, maketh *Paul* use these encouraging and softning passages; to rebukes we must joyn meeknesse and love together. The Artificer cannot build his house with hard brick or stone, he must have his soft mortar to cement them together: Rigidnesse to rigidnesse will never unite. There must be yeelding as well as severity, else the edification of Gods Church cannot proceed.

The words are a profession of *Pauls* charitable esteem and loving apprehensions of them, though sometimes he doth rebuke them very sharply. If he had said, I have no hopes of you, no Epistle, or writing will do you any good, this might have more hardened them in obstinacy. Yea as *Chrysostom* well observeth on this place, He speaketh more hopefully and confidently of these *Corinthians*, then he doth of the *Thessalonians*: For, 1 *Thess.* 2. 2, 3, 4, 5. he there discovereth the holy jealousie and fear he had, lest they should be too much moved with the afflictions that do accompany the Gospel, *When I could no longer forbear* (saith he) *I sent Timotheus to establish you, that no man should be moved by these afflictions.* Again he repeateth it, *When I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter should tempt you.* By these vehement and doubled affectionate expressions, you see with what a holy jealousie he was possessed concerning them, but he speaketh farre



farre more confidently about these *Corinthians*, *Our hope of you is stedfast*. That which the Apostle here calleth *his hope*, he doth often in other places name *his perswasion*, Heb. 6. 9. *We are perswaded better things of you.* 2 Tim. 1. 5. *I am perswaded that the same faith dwelleth in thee also.* 1 Pet. 5. 12. The Apostle speaking of *Sylvanus*, calleth him a *faithfull brother*, (1 Pet. 5. 12.) *as I suppose*. The word doth not there denote any doubt or fear about him; for that is contrary to the Apostles scope, who intends to commend him; but it signifieth a firm and stedfast judgement concerning his faithfulness. Now the Question is, *What is that hope and perswasion, or knowledge, which Paul had concerning other men?* To understand this you must know, *Paul* had a two-fold hope, A *Divine Hope*, and a *Charitable or Prudential Hope*, which we may call a *Moral Hope*. *Divine Hope* is a supernatural grace wrought by God in the heart of *Paul*, and so in every believer, whereby he is enabled to put his confidence in God, expecting from him onely what he stands in need of. So that of *Divine Hope* God is the efficient, and God also is the object on which it is determined, and as we must not believe in any thing, but God, so nether hope in any thing but God. Of this *Divine Hope* *Paul* doth not here speak, he doth not say, *Our hope in you is stedfast*, but of *you*, *ἐν ὑμῖν*, *ἐπεὶ* for *ἐπεὶ* (as those Prepositions are often changed.) Therefore it is a *Moral Hope* which is grounded upon principles of prudence and charity, by which *Paul* was bound to judge thus favourably of them. *Paul* could not tell the hearts of those he wrote to; he could not intallibly discern, whether they were hypocrites, or sincere, onely he judgeth the tree by the fruits. Yet you must not understand this, as spoken of every particular and individual, but collectively; for he writeth to them as a body, and a Church, and so it must be understood indefinitely, not determinately of this or that person. It is true indeed, there was in the primitive times, among other extraordinary gifts, that of the discerning of spirits (if by *Spirit* we are not rather to mean Doctrines pretended to be of the Spirit, as 1 John 4. 1. rather than the hearts and frames of mens spirits.) For although absolutely, originally and independently it be Gods only prerogative to know the hearts of men; yet in some cases, as in *Elisba* with *Gebezi*, God may reveal the thoughts and secret motions of heart to others; but this is extraordinary, not constant, no more than working of miracles. So that it is a very absurd opinion of those that are called *Quakers*, who say, That light within them discovers what is in other mens hearts, abusing that place, *The spiritual man judgeth all things*, whereas the Apostle there informeth us, 1 Cor. 2. 11. *That no man knoweth the things of a man, save the Spirit of man, which is within him.* The perswasion then or hope, *Paul* had of these *Corinthians*, was not divine and infallible, in which he could not be deceived, but of an inferiour nature, yet not light and foolish neither: for he saith, *It was ῥῆσιν, firme and stedfast*. *Hesychius* renders that word ἀσάλευτον, *unshaken*, that is, not like the waves of the Sea. So that *Pauls* hope did not fluctuate about him, and μένουσαν, *abiding, continuing*. It was not hope at sometimes, and fear at another, but it did abide and dwell in him. Observe,

What is that hope and perswasion which *Paul* had of other men.  
A two-fold hope, *Divine* and *Moral*.

What is the *Divine* hope.  
What *Moral* hope is.

'Tis a great encouragement to the Ministers of God, to have good grounds for the hope of grace and stedfastnesse in their people.

*That it is a great encouragement to a godly Minister, to see good grounds for the hope of true grace and stedfastnesse in Gods wayes, in the people committed to his charge.*

This was that which did here refresh *Paul*, that though he was put to many exercises and temptations about them; yet his hope was, that as it is said of *Lazarus*, his sicknesse was not unto death, but that the glory of God



God might be manifested. So those failings and decayes amongst the Corinthians were not for their destruction, but by their recovery and repentance to manifest the truth of grace more in them. In most of Pauls Epistles you may see this spiritual and publick affection in him, where any are decaying or falling off, there his heart is wounded within him, where any flourish and continue stedfast in holinesse, there he rejoyceth and triumpheth. How notably doth he speak, *1 Thess. 3. 7. We were comforted over you in all our afflictions by your faith: for now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.* Here we see Paul did not so much regard his own afflictions and distresse, as the grace of the Thessalonians; and because they did not abate in their faith by the afflictions they met with, therefore thus comforted him in all his distresse: Yea he professeth he liveth, if they stand fast, as if their Apostasie would be worse than all his troubles to him, yea would break his heart, and be his death. The Epistle also to the Galatians, who began to decay and to end in the flesh after their beginning in the Spirit, doth abundantly declare what agonies he was in about them, *Galat. 4. 19. Little children of whom I travail again in birth: he compareth those troubles and exercises of his mind about them to the pangs and groans of a woman in travail, Who hath bewitched you, Galat. 3. 1.* By this you may gather, that the joyes of Paul did ebbe or flow according to the increase or decrease of the graces of these he had spiritual inspection over.

To discover this truth, Let us consider, *What things made Paul have such hopes about these Corinthians, and apply these things to our selves.* And

First, *Their amendment and repentance*, by the former Epistle wrote to them, in that you may see the body of the Church of Corinth was almost like *Jobs* or *Lazaruss* body, full of spiritual loathsomnesse, corruptions in Doctrine and practice, and some of them in a very high nature, for which our zealous Apostle, as the Lord Christ once did, maketh a rod to drive these corruptions out, he is both a light shining and burning; he keepeth to that rule, which he giveth *Timothy*, *Rebuke sharply, and reprove in all Doctrine.* He is salt to these Corinthians. Now these sharp reproofes do not provoke them to discontent, to impatience; but it had a savoury and spiritual operation upon them. If he said, *Genus quoddam est Martyrii reprehensionem patienter ferre, It's a kind of Martyrdome to suffer reproof patiently*; then these Corinthians were *Martyrs* in this sense: for they did not onely take these rebukes well, but are thereby put upon a zealous and powerfull repentance. So that when this spiritual Phylician saw his medicines kindly operate, then he began to hope well of them. On the other side, we see the Prophets complaining of *Jerusalem* as incurable, *Because she slighted the Prophets, and stoned them*, so that there remained no more remedy for them. The Prophets complained, *They stretched out their hands all the day long to a rebellious people, and that the bellows were consumed, yet the dross was not purged away.* This then is a very hopefull symptome about a people, when we see by the Word preached, that their hearts are broken, that they are counvinced and ashamed of what they have done, and reforme for the future. The Apostle speaketh fully to this, *2 Cor. 7. 8, 9, 10, 11. This self same thing that you were made sorry after a godly manner; what carefulnesse it wrought in you, yea what zeal, what revenge, &c. In all things you have approved your selves to be clear in this matter.* Oh the carefulnesse and zeal that was in the Corinthians after Pauls admonitions to repent and reform. So that he had good grounds to say, *Our hope of you is stedfast.* Oh then, let our Congregations be examined and tried in this ve-

What things they were which made Paul hope so well of the Corinthians.  
1. Their amendment and repentance by his former Epistle.



ry particular. What repentance and reformation hath the prophane man shewed after the many admonitions to him? What Reformation is there made about the holy and strict observation of the Sabbath? What caretull performances of holy duties in thy family, concerning which thou hast heard so much? Oh that we had cause to say of such persons, of such families, though once we fear'd for them, though once we mourned and grieved for them, yet now we rejoyce, and our hope of them is very stedfast. But may we not cry, woe, woe, and again woe to our Congregations, that are like *Golgothaes*, places not of dead mens skulls, but dead hearts; yea dead men, according to that of our Saviour, *Let the dead bury the dead*. Have not the Ministers of God been many yeares laying the Axe of the Word to the root of prophanenesse and ignorance, which is in most families, in most Congregations? Yet how greatly doth it abound? Surely of such families, of such Congregations, we may with grief of heart say, *As yet we have no hope*.

2. Their setting up that good and holy order which was thrown down.

Secondly, *This is more particularly observable in the Corinthians repentance, that they repair and set up that good and holy order, which was collapsed amongst them*. And therefore as Paul said to the *Colossians*, Chap. 2. 5. *He did rejoyce to behold their order*: So might he here. In his former Epistle he severely taxeth them for want of *Church-Discipline*, that they neglected good order; there was a scandalous sinner suffered amongst them, and they did not mourn and humble themselves, because of it; they did not cast him out, and free the Church from that contagion; therefore with many arguments he presseth them to gather together, and to execute Church-Discipline, to cast out this wicked person from amongst them, *2 Corinth. 5.* which accordingly they did. or were about to do; yea they seem to fall into too much austerity from their laxe indulgence and connivence at sinne to too much severity against a penitent humbled sinner, as appeareth *2 Cor. 2.* where the Apostle exhorts them, *To confirm their love to the incestuous person, now deeply sensible of his sinne, lest he be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow*. When therefore Paul saw that those who had such disorders in their Church, no zeal against sinners, no endeavours to purge out the old leaven, to be so greatly changed, that they are hardly perswaded to moderate their zeal; this may well provoke him to say, *His hope was stedfast of them*. For if they would have been remisse, and negligent in any thing, it would have been about Church-order. For we see sound Doctrine is sooner received into any Church, than holy Discipline; There were but few Kings among the *Jewes*, that did endeavour a Reformation of the disorder which was about Ordinances; and it is noted as a peculiar work of God upon those mens hearts, who were ready thereunto; as for the other they mocked and derided at such a pious endeavour, *2 Chron. 30. 10, 11, 12.* There was the hand of God upon some in a special manner to induce them thereunto. The Church of *Ephesus*, *Revel. 2. 2.* is commended, *Because she could not bear those that were evil*. It argueth the strength of the stomach to exonerate it self of burdensome humours. So that by this we see, That the hopes of those who are faithfull Guides in the Church, are greatly quenched concerning such who are refractory, and adversaries to that holy order which would deliver the Congregation from the ignorance and prophanenesse abiding there. The very *Heathens* will rise up in judgement against them, who would admit no prophane sinner to their *Heathenish Rites*, witnesse that known acclamation, *Procul, o procul este prophani*. The Priest also about to sacrifice, asked, *τις τῶν, Who was there?* And answer was returned, *καὶ λοκαλαδαι, Good and honest men*. Origen also justifying the Christian Discipline that did shut out from their communion prophane persons, instanceth in the Sect of *Pythagoreans*, who when any of their company had fallen

into



into grosse sinnes, they ejected him, and sent a Coffin to him made for that purpose; signifying thereby, that he was no better than a dead corpse. Yea, the *Socinians* though blaspheming the Deity of Christ, will condemn such carnal Gospeliers. For this is one argument they use against the Evangelical Reformed Churches, that there is not such holy order against prophane and impenitent sinners, as ought to be. Yea some of them go so farre, as to say, That that is not a Church, which hath not Discipline. If then *Heathens* and damnable Hereticks have been zealous for purity about their religious Rites; how hopelesse are they, who had rather with the *Gadarens* have Christ go out of their Countrey, then be deprived of their swinish lusts?

Thirdly, Lastly, *Pauls* hope was therefore stedfast concerning the *Corinthians*, Because of that which followeth in the Text: they did communicate with Paul in a patient suffering for Christ, and therefore being sufferers with Christ, they should also reign with him. Christs friends are tried in the time of adversity. It's an hopeful sign of an honest and sincere heart, when thou canst cleave to Christ, and confesse his Name in the midst of all persecutions: Then Christ saith, *Now I know thou lovest me, because thou hast not withholden thy dearest comforts for my sake.* When under persecutions for Christs name, thou canst rejoyce, and not as *Bonaventure* expresseth it, be like the Cart-wheel, which while it beareth its burden, doth sometimes make an harsh and unpleasant noise. Christ hath both his Summer and his Winter for his Church; and therefore this Garden, *Habet Lilia sua & rosas suas*, Her Lilies in time of peace, and her Roses in time of persecution. Now those that love Christ more than father or mother, or life it self; and then (as it followeth) *Matth. 10. 37, 38.* take up his crosse; for this can never be done without the former; these do give great hopes of the truth of grace in them. Now the ground of this encouragement to a godly Minister is, the state of grace here, and of glory hereafter. For his flock is both the end of his work, and the end of him that worketh. It is both *finis operis* and *operantis*. As then Christ whose death was for the salvation of believers, is said to see the travail of his soul, and to be satisfied: So it is with every true Pastor. What a joyfull thing would it be to have good hopes of the work of grace in every one that belongeth to his charge? So that thy ignorance, dissolutenesse, and such damnable wayes are the grief and trouble, the thorns in the sides of those, who are to give an account for thee. Oh let not the contrary be true, that such is the ungodlinesse, the prophanenesse of thy life, that our fear of thee, our grief about thee is continual!

3. Because they did communicate with Paul in a patient suffering for Christ.





## SERM. LVII.

*Of our partaking with others in their Suffering for Christ, and how this is a way to interest our selves in the Joy and Glory which such Sufferers enjoy.*

2 COR. I. 7.

*Knowing that as you are partakers of the sufferings; so shall ye be also of the consolation.*

**I**N these words we have a Declaration or Specification, wherein, or wherefore the hope of the Apostle was thus stedfast concerning them; it is, because they did not wholly cast off Paul, and contemn him for his afflictions, as the false Apostles endeavoured. The Apostles hope was stedfast (as you heard) not like the hope that we sometimes have, which is mutable and uncertain. For how many are there with Pharaoh and Abab under some judgements of God, or under some exquisite agonies of the soul, which complain of their sinnes, cry out of their impieties? So that we have some buddings of hope concerning them, till at last they dash all, and disappoint all expectation by their Apostasie; but such is not the Apostles hope concerning these, he hath a surer foundation; and therefore he saith, *εἰδότες*, *Knowing*, not guessing, or opinionating by slight conjectures, but knowing. It should according to the rule of Grammar be *εἰδόντων*, for it is constructed with *ἡμῶν*, but it is usual with the Apostle to transgresse such rules of Grammar. This Samson is not tied in such cords. The vehement and affectionate zeal of Paul in his expressions cannot be so manacled. Thus the word is used abruptly, Rom. 13. 11.

In the second place, we have the object of this his knowledge concerning the Corinthians, and that is, that they were *κοινωνοὶ*, *Partakers of*, or *in communion with him in his afflictions*; *ἢ τῶν πειρασμῶν αὐτοῦ*: What is more humble and lowly than Paul in this expression? saith Chrysostome; they who had not in the least measure shared with him in sufferings, yet he maketh them copartners with him. They are as Salmeron expresseth it, *Copartners in the gain, and in the losse with Paul*. They venture (as it were) in the Ship together. The word *κοινωνία*, of which cometh *κοινωνός* in the Text, is taken sometimes actively, not for communion so much as communication. Therefore it is called distribution, 2 Cor. 9. 13. Thus 1 Cor. 13. 13. *The communion of the Spirit*, that is, *The communication of the Spirit*. And so 1 Cor. 10. 16. *The bread and wine*, *Is it not the communion?* The sense may be, *The communication of his body, and his blood*; but very often it is used intransitively (as it were) and signifieth Fellowship, Society and Communion. The Object of which spiritual communion is fully set down, 1 John 1. 3.

Ye



*Ye have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with the Sonne.*

As for the Adjective, which is the word in the Text, we have it used in that which is *Evil*, and in that which is *Good*. In that which is *sinfull*, 2 Cor. 10. 10. *I would not have you ~~knowers~~, partakers of the table of Devils.* Thus also the Verb *κοινωνω* is used, 1 Tim. 5. 22. *Partake not of other mens sinnes.* And 2 John 12. *He that biddeth him, God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.* We are not only to keep our selves from acting of sinne; but look we do not partake with other in their impieties; and that is done many wayes; most have cause to pray with that good man, *Lord forgive me my other mens sinnes.* If thou doest communicate with such, then the Text will on the contrary be verified upon thee; as thou doest partake with them in their sins, so thou shalt in their terrour and damnation. But

2. There is a good participation or copartnership, of which the Text here speaketh. Though Paul was persecuted and suffered much for the preaching of the Gospel, yet this did not deterre the *Corinthians*, or make them to be scandalized at Christ, and so to fall off from him; but they looked upon Pauls sufferings, as their own, and so are affected with his periecutions, as if they themselves were persecuted. This was it which made Paul have such a stedfast hope of their sincerity; for if their foundation had been sandy, such tempestuous winds would have overthrowed all. Observe,

*That a partaking of, and communion with those who suffer for Christ, is a sure way to interest in all that joy and glory which such sufferers shall at last receive from God.*

The *Corinthians* shall partake with Paul in joy and glory, because they are willing to partake with him in afflictions and persecutions. The joy that is spoken of in the Text, is a distinct thing from glory and eternal happinesse; for that is not till the Resurrection, but Consolation is for the present while we are here in the valley of tears. And indeed if we take consolation for the relieving and reviving of the heart under miseries, so it cannot be in Heaven, but in this world only.

To discover this truth, consider

First, *That there may be a two-fold participation of, or fellowship with others that are in afflictions:*

1. When though we our selves are freed and delivered from all troubles, enjoying all outward peace and quietnesse, yet we are compassionately affected with the condition of all those members of Christ upon the earth who may be in an afflicted and troubled state. For seeing all the people of God make up one body, if any part thereof suffer, the other parts condole and suffer with it: Insomuch that it is plain, thou art a dead part in the body, destitute of all spiri- tual life; if thou canst see the Church of God, or any part thereof lie wounded like the man of *Jericho*, and thou like the Priest and the *Levite* passe by, not laying it to heart. This fellowship in suffering is part of the Apostles meaning, which he attributeth to the *Corinthians*, and is indeed a good and sure hope of grace in whomsoever we find it, Heb. 13. 3. The Apostle there exhorts to re- member such as are in bonds, but how? Not in a superficial carelesse manner, but as cordially and affectionately, as if we were bound with them. Now con- sider, that if thou wert impoverished, if thou wert banished, if thou wert im- prisoned, how much would it possesse thy heart all the day long? No lesse is to be done for others, whom God thus exercises. The Scripture doth much delight in the comparison of the Church with the natural body, and that be- cause of the intimate conjunction and sympathy which is between the members

A double communion,  
1. In what is evil.

2. In what is good.

The commu-  
nion with  
those who  
suffer for  
Christ, is a fait  
way to their  
joy and glory.

1. A two-fold  
communion  
with the affli-  
cted.

1. When a  
man living in  
peace and  
quietness him-  
self, yet is affe-  
cted with  
their suffer-  
ings.



if one be honoured, all rejoyce; if one be pained, all grieve. The Prophet complaineth, *Amos 6. 6.* of those who enjoyed their pleasures, and made themselves merry, but did not remember the afflictions of Joseph. Know then, that it is a special touchstone of thy grace, when with *Nehemiah*, thou hast all things that can be desired for thy private content, yet doest mourn and pray, because of the desolations of *Jerusalem*; and this may be one answer to that Question, Why should you speak so much of afflictions and troubles to those who have none at all? For let that be granted, yet are all the Churches of God in quietness and freedom? Look abroad and see how it fareth with many that call on the Name of Christ; and thou wilt have cause to see, that though thou art not afflicted outwardly, yet in thy heart and soul thou art to be afflicted in all the afflictions of others. Why doest thou live, as if thou wert not of the body? Be of a more publick spirit, let the Churches gain, or losses be as thine own.

2. When a man is cast into the same outward condition.

2. *There is a fellowship with the afflictions of others, not onely spiritual, but real, when we are cast into the same outward condition, as others are.* And this also may be part of the meaning in the Text. They were not onely Spectators of *Pauls* troubles, but they themselves had part of this burden upon their own shoulders: That cup of tribulation was given them to drink, as well as others. For although persecutions do sometimes fall onely upon the Pastors and Officers in the Church, yet for the most part it is universal, and pursueth all that call on Christ: That as with Christ there is no bond or free, no Jew or Gentile, all are one; so it is also with the enemies of Gods Church in their persecutions, all are one to them. Look not then for an Ark, when all the people of God shall be in the waters. Though an *Obadiah* may live quietly in *Ahabs* Court, when the *Elijahs* are sought for, to be put to death, yet this is not alwayes so; and that man, who will own Christ upon no other condition, but that he may not suffer for him, or be persecuted for him, that man is unsound and rotten at the very heart.

2. It is as glorious and acceptable to be a companion to sufferers, as to suffer.

Secondly, Consider that it is no lesse glorious before man, and acceptable unto God, to be a companion and an associate with those who do suffer, then if we did suffer our selves in our own person. This hath been alwayes a very hard task for flesh and blood, to own the godly, while they are in a suffering condition. The Disciples themselves proved cowards and unfaithfull in this temptation: for when the Shepherd was smitten, all the sheep were scattered. When Christ was to be crucified, all his Apostles fled from him, they dared not own him; and when Peter was charged to be one of Christs company, He curseth and sweareth, he did not know the man; he was afraid to own so much as the very knowledge of Christ. Indeed the godly women, *Mary* the mother of Christ, and others, they shewed more grace and courage than the very Apostles, that all honour and glory may be given to God alone; but as for his Disciples, they hid themselves, and were afraid to be companions with him. Hence the Apostle, *Heb. 10. 33.* exhorting believers, To call to mind their enduring of a great fight of afflictions, he instanteth wherein, partly, Whilest ye were made a gazing stock, both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly whilest ye became companions of them, that were so used. Here you see, to become a companion to those that suffer, not to flie from them, or forsake them, is made a great expression of their love to God. *Paul* also *2 Tim. 1. 16.* remembers what *Onesiphorus* did to him, while in bonds, he mentioneth it, as if he would never have it forgotten any more, than that womans box of ointment poured on Christ. The Lord give mercy to the house of *Onesiphorus*; Why? Because he answered his name indeed, He oft refreshed me, he sought me out very diligently, and was not ashamed of my chain. What a glorious character is here given to *Onesiphorus*? He was not persecuted himself, but



but he made himself a companion with those that were. *Paul complaineth of Demas, 2 Tim. 4. 10. That he had forsaken him, for he was now in bonds,* and to answer before *Nero*, who was known to be nothing but clay and blood mingled together, whose cruelty would extend to all abettors and well-wishers. If any did but sigh in his time, it was a capital crime. This fear made *Demas*, (as it did all his other friends, *vers. 16.*) forsake *Paul*; they had not faith and courage enough to venture for him, and therefore it's said, *He did love the present world*; he loved his life and liberty too much; though some think this was but a temptation in *Demas*, and that he did return to *Paul* again. By this we see, how hard a thing it is, to own those that are godly in their extremities. *John 19. 38, 39.* It is noted both of *Joseph of Arimathea*, and of *Nicodemus*, both Disciples of Christ, but secretly for fear of the *Jews*, yet when Christ was crucified, they shewed their boldnesse and courage about Christs body, when he was dead. And *Matth. 25.* at that terrible day of Judgement, judicial processe against sinnes of omission, will be for neglect in this, *I was in prison, and ye visited me not.* When Christ and his cause are discountenanced in the world, then unlesse a man have a sincere and upright heart, he will curse with *Peter*, and swear, That he knoweth not the men.

These things laid as a foundation, let us consider, why such sympathizing with, and partaking of others afflictions, doth interest in eternal glory. And

First, This Reason is evident, *Because hereby we plainly demonstrate, that our Faith in Christ, and acknowledging of him, is upon divine and spiritual grounds, that we do not know Christ, and the Christian faith after the flesh, Matth. 13.* This discovered the thorny ground not to be true and right soil, because in time of temptation, when the scorching Sun did arise, then all the hopefull fruit began to wither. This apostatizing from Christ in time of such temptations, is so great a matter, that we are constantly to pray for the grace and assistance of God therein, that we be not left to our selves. For *Peter* being forsaken in some measure only, how dreadfull was his fall? And for this end it is that God suffereth persecutions and troubles to accompany the profession of his truth, that so it may be known who are sound, and who hypocrites. If thou art but chaff, this winnowing will drive thee away. They are but a very few that acknowledge Christ upon spiritual and enduring grounds. So that though the world rage, though enemies be furious and bloudy, yet they stand like *Mount Zion*, that cannot be moved. Many become Christians, as some did *Jews* in *Mardochees* time for fear, and because the State favoured the *Jews*. Outward restraint maketh many take the title of Christians, but they live the life of *Heathens*, because the pleasures of sinne are present, and affect the sense. *Orant quia timent, peccant quia volunt,* They pray and performe outward religious duties, because they are afraid; but they sinne, because their will and pleasure inclineth thereunto. Now these drossie Christians, when they are brought to the fire, they presently melt away. It cannot be denied but that men may suffer much for a while at least, and yet at last deny Christ, as we have sad instances in Ecclesiastical History; but many times such, with that famous *Cranmer*, did prove the more couragious, and took an holy revenge upon themselves. This accompanying Christ in his dangers, hath a notable promise, *Luke 22. 28. Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations, therefore I appoint unto you a Kingdome, that ye may eat and drinke with me, and sit on thrones judging Israel.* Even as Christ manifested his pure love to us, that in the midst of all the agonies and miseries he grappled with from God and men, yet he did not give over our cause, but compleated our redemption for us. If so be *Solomon* did so much favour *Abiathar*, though he de-

Reasons why partaking with the Saints afflictions, doth interest us in their glory.

1. This demonstrates our faith in Christ to be upon spiritual grounds.

served



served death, that he told him he would not put him to death, though guilty, because he had been afflicted in all wherein his father was afflicted, 1 Kin. 2. 26. How much more will Christ say thus to such, who have not been driven from him by great afflictions?

2. Because this is suffering for Christ.

Secondly, Such communion in afflictions must needs interest in glory, *Because this is suffering for Christ*. Thou that art a companion to such as suffer, thou dost suffer, partly in thy heart and affections, and partly exposing thy self to the rage of men, for owning such. The approving, the pleading for, and refreshing of those that do suffer for Christ, proclaimeth to others, that thou art of the same way and perswasion, and that thou art ready to receive whatsoever load the world shall lay upon thee. So that it is not any defect in thy zeal, or in the adversaries malice that maketh thee no sufferer, but the meer providence of God, which restraineth these Lions that they do not devour thee, when they do others.

*Use of Instruction*, how false and hypocritical a thing it is to forsake any godly persons, while they are in danger for Gods work; especially for people to recoil and draw back from their Pastors and Guides, while valiant for the truth. In such carnal and worldly fears, thou publishest thy corrupt and hypocritical heart to all the world: Thou that dost not in thy place and calling stand by and encourage such who suffer for righteousness sake, thou betrayest Christ like a *Judas* for thirty pieces of silver. See what a sad complaint *Paul* maketh of such false and self-seeking revolvers, 2 Tim. 4. 16, 17. *At my first defence no man stood with me, but all men forsook me.* Now lest you should think that it might be such an infirmity of fear as might excuse, he addeth, *I pray God, it be not laid to their charge.* The same petition *Stephen* (Act. 7.) useth about his persecutors. Indeed concerning *Alexander* who so much withstood him, he saith, *The Lord reward him according to his work*; because he was a malicious opposer; but these did withdraw out of infirmity; yet *Paul's* prayer argueth it to be a very dangerous thing so to do.





# SERM, LVIII.

*How usefull it is to the children of God, to know the Afflictions which the Saints suffer for Christs sake : And why the Preaching concerning the Saints afflictions, even from Heathens, is necessary to Christians, though for the present they be in peace and quietness.*

## 2 COR. I. 8.

*For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we are pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life.*

**W**E are now arrived at the eighth verse, which *Piscator* maketh the beginning of that *Apologetical Narration*, which we have *Paul* declaring in the following part of the Chapter against those calumnies that were cast upon him. The first whereof was his *levity* and *inconstancy*. For having promised to come to them, he did not, which the false teachers branded with mutability. Now it is thought that *Paul* instanceth in this great trouble he met with in *Asia*, as the cause why he did not come, as he had promised. But I rather joyn with those, that do make it part of the precedent Discourse about afflictions and consolations in them. So that what he had in the general only spoken of before, he now illustrateth in particular; because (saith *Cajetan* on the place, *Sermones morales*, &c. *Moral Discourses* are the more effectual, by how much the more particular they are. *Paul* therefore having in the general asserted the blessed fruit and gracious issue of afflictions to such as believe; he instanceth in himself, by an heavy affliction which did befall him, and of the wonderfull deliverance which God vouchsafed to him. He was like *Jonah* even in the whales belly, and yet God vouchsafed mercy and consolation to him.

So that in the words we may take notice of,

1. *The Description of the trouble it self.* And
2. *The Introductory Expression to it.*

We begin with the latter at this time, the *introductory Expression*; and in that we have the *Compellation*, ἀδελφοί, *brethren*; a Title which *Paul* often delighteth to use; wherein he doth demonstrate his humility and meekness. For though constituted in so eminent an Office as the Apostleship was, yet he looketh upon all believers, as his *brethren*. Though he had a paternal power in respect of his Office, yet such also was his humility therein, that he accounts of them

Of the compellation which *Paul* useth, brethren



them as *brethren*, so farre was he from affecting any tyrannical dominion over them, he joyneth a *fraternal affection* with a *paternal office*. But of this more in the last verse. This Title also signifieth that love and Christian communion, which is to be amongst Pastor and people; no contentions, no variance or divisions are to be entertained. But of this also enough hath been spoken elsewhere.

Of the expression, *I would not have you ignorant*.

Come we then to the *Introduction* it self, *ὅτι οὐκ ἠγάπα ὑμᾶς ἀγνοοῖν*, *I would not have you ignorant*. This expression the Apostle commonly useth, when he is to speak of something that is of a very weighty and momentous consideration. *Rom. 11. 25. I would not have you ignorant of this mystery, that blindness in part is happened to Israel.* So *1 Cor. 10. 1. 1 Cor. 12. 1.* Concerning sacramental administrations, and the nature, with the use of spiritual gifts, *Paul would not have them ignorant.* Likewise *1 Thess. 4. 13.* *Paul* speaking of that great and wonderfull day of Christs coming to judgement, with the manner of this judicial processe, saith, *I would not have you ignorant.* So that by this expression we may see, that the historical passage which *Paul* mentioneth of his *Asian* trouble, was of great use and well worthy to be known. The false Apostles they took occasion from *Pauls* sufferings to contemne him, and to bring him into disgrace, as if he had been a turbulent and seditious person; but *Paul* is so farre from being ashamed of his troubles, or desirous to conceal them, that he rather desireth to publish them, that all who fear God may know of them, as also Gods gracious dealing with him in the issue. Observe,

'Tis of great use to know the afflictions of those who suffer for Christs sake.

*That it is of very great use to know what are the afflictions and troubles which do befall the servants of God for his sake.*

The History of the Saints sufferings, what they have endured, how wonderfully God hath preserved and comforted them, is of very great practical use. The people of God have a communion, not only in Church-duties, and Church-priviledges, but also in afflictions and sufferings; and therefore if he as a man said, *Nihil humani à se alienum*, we may say, *Nihil Christiani, &c.* No man is to account that as strange, which he heareth any Christian may labour under. Thus *Colos. 4. 7, 8, 9.* *Paul* being in bonds for the Gospel, doth on purpose send *Onesimus* and *Tychicus* to them, to declare his estate to them, and also to know how it stood with them, because by such mutual intercourse, there is a mutual edification of one another.

I shall briefly instance in some general great advantages that may be made, by our understanding of the afflictions and troubles, that are very heavy upon others. And

Reasons.

1. Hereby we shall be more provoked to pray for them.

First, *Hereby we shall be the more provoked to pray for them, to wrestle with God in their behalf.* It is good to consider, how earnestly *Paul*, though so eminent and choice a man in holinesse, doth desire the prayers of others; and therefore when he had spoken of that confidence he had in God, who as he had, so also would for the future deliver him, he addeth, *vers. 11. You also helping together by prayer for us*; as if none of those great mercies *Paul* looked for could be brought forth, but by the help of their prayers. This then is that, which maketh the godly desirous, that others who fear God, may know how it is with them, what temptations they lie under, what afflictions they grapple with, that so they may have the effectual fervent prayers of a righteous man, which availeth much. Though the prophane deride and scoffe, yet the prayer of any true godly man is greatly to be valued, and much to be desired.

Secondly,



Secondly, As such are thereby provoked to pray to God for them; so when God shall mercifully deliver them, and turn their afflictions for good, then they will also be encouraged to bless and praise God also in their behalf, and thus more glory redoundeth still to God. Thus also the Apostle, *vers. 11.* declareth, That by the means of many persons thanks may be given to God on our behalf. Thus you see no Christian is to live to himself, but it is his duty to be praying to God for others, and praising God in the behalf of others; but how little are the people of God exercised in these communion duties? How little zealous in prayer for others, but farre more negligent in the praises of God for others? When dost thou bless God for the mercies, deliverance vouchsafed to the afflicted Saints of God, as if they were thy own? This publick affection is greatly wanting in believers, who do not consider they are of the body.

Thirdly, By knowing the afflictions of others, and their holy deportment under them, thou mayest thereby learne patience, zeal, heavenly mindednesse, and many other graces. Afflictions are Gods schools, and that whether on thy self, or on others. How much patience may we learn by the afflictions upon Job? Thus James 5. 10, 11. The Prophets who spake in the name of the Lord must be taken as an example of suffering affliction, and of patience; and ye have heard of the patience of Job: How greatly did the waves of God passe over his head? No Martyr, as Chrysostome amplifieth it, came near Job in all their sufferings: and therefore the holy Ghost thought fit to have the History of Job recorded, that all might know and learn by it. Be not then a stranger to the sufferings of Gods people, but inform thy self about them, to imitate their graces, to be encouraged to do the like, when God shall call thee to fight his battels.

But you may say, What use can be made from the preaching about such afflictions which Paul, and the other primitive Christians suffered from Paganish and Heathenish enemies? We have no Neroes or Diocletians, neither are we called to prisons and Martyrdom. To what purpose is it to preach of sufferings to those, who live in all quietnesse and freedom? What use or good improvement can we make of it?

Therefore it is necessary to answer this Objection. And

First, By the same reason you may say, To what purpose did the Spirit of God cause this Chapter to be written, with many other passages of the like nature, which treat of afflictions, and that from Pagans? Certainly, though we be not for the present exercised as they are, yet the record of this, the Doctrine about this is of very great concernment. Therefore

Secondly, Though thou art not called to be a Martyr, or to suffer from such enemies, yet there is none that will live godly, but they shall meet with afflictions one way or other. We read of no child of God without his tribulations. None can come into Canaan, but they must first go thorow a wilderness: They must first with Christ suffer, and so enter into glory. We told you, that there are afflictions of divers sorts; There are real, and there are verbal afflictions. Though thou dost not suffer in thy life, and in thy liberty, yet thou mayest in thy name, and in thy outward comforts. There is no man, which liveth in a zealous, lively manner for God, and endeavouring to pull down the kingdom of Satan; but the Devil and his instruments will raise opposition enough against him; and therefore it is good to hear Sermons about sufferings for Christ. For though thy troubles be not such great and bloody ones, as the Martyrs have been, yet thou art to drink part of this bitter cup: The Lord he hath given thee a portion in these tribulations: and truly there is not the least affliction befalls us in the way of God, but if God did not preserve us, and keep us by his grace, we should sinke under it. The frowne of a man, the fear of a mock is

L I

enough.

2. Hereby they will be more encouraged to bless God, when they are delivered.

3. Hereby we may learn patience, zeal and heavenly mindedness, and other graces.

Qu. What use is to be made of preaching about such afflictions which Paul and other Christians suffered from Heathens?  
Answ. I.



enough to discourage us from our duty, if God doth not corroborate us. If therefore the world doth not hate us, if that be not a professed enemy to us, we may justly doubt, whether we be the Womans seed, or not rather the Serpents seed. Seeing therefore thou hast thy tribulations more or lesse, and that for righteousnesse, thou mayest improve this truth for thy edification.

*Answ. 2.*

Secondly, *What though the Church of God meeteth not with persecutions and troubles from Pagans and Heathens, yet those it suffereth from such who pretend to Christ, and judge it special service of God so to afflict them, have a sharper sting in them.* What miseries and bloody cruelties have not many godly Protestants suffered from Papists? who yet glory that they only are zealous for Christ, that others are blasphemers and enemies to Christ, and therefore ought to be punished with such severe censures. Now may not such Martyrs and sufferers receive as much comfort, as if they had been persecuted from Heathens? Yea doubtless, for in some respects their suffering is the greater, and their constancy the more admirable. When the holy Prophets were stoned to death by the people of the Jews, that yet thought themselves to be the onely people of God, this did not diminish but aggravate their glory. The patience of Abel was more admirable in being slain by his brother Cain, then if it had been by a stranger. If therefore thy sufferings arise from such who highly pretend to the glory and truth of Christ: Be not despondent, for thy crown of glory will herein be greater, than if it had been from open adversaries. Hence it is observable, how remarkably the Scripture speaketh of those who suffered by Antichrist, Rev. 13. 10. *Here is the patience, and the faith of the Saints*, which is again mentioned, Rev. 14. 12. A true Christian suffering from false Christians, hath not the promises of God obscured or diminished hereby to him, but rather enlarged; for God considereth both from whom it is thou art troubled, and the cause why, and the manner how thou bearest it.

*Answ. 3.*

Thirdly, *These truths about suffering for Christ are usefull even to such who enjoy all freedom and abundance; because there is a two-fold Martyrdom, Martyrium cordis, and Martyrium corporis; a Martyrdom of the heart, and a Martyrdom of the body.* If therefore thou art not called to suffer bodily, it is certain thou must suffer spiritually, *Habes quod in te occidas*; if others do not martyr thee, thou art to martyr thy self. Hence is that duty, *Of offering up our selves as a Sacrifice to God.* Hence it is we are commanded, *To deny our selves, to take up our crosse, to pull out the right eye, to cut off the right hand; and the constant practice of Christianity is, To mortifie the flesh, to crucifie the flesh.* Inasmuch that the ancient Writers do frequently compare this soul-mortification to the bodily Martyrdom. He that doth abstain from the seeming pleasures and profits of sinne, this man is a spiritual Martyr. He that doth crucifie his will, that doth subdue and conquer his corruptions, it is as much from the grace of God, as he that is enabled to lay down his life for Christs sake; all these come from the same principle. There is required an insuperable divine and efficacious power of grace to bring the heart to any holy duty, to avoid any sinne, from pure and holy motives. It is therefore of consequence to hear of the consolations which God giveth in sufferings: for if thou hast not corporal sufferings, thou hast spiritual ones, and therefore God he will proportion thy comforts to thy exercises.

*Answ. 4.*

Fourthly, *It is good to understand and possesse our souls with the afflictions of others, that hereby we may acknowledge the mercy of God to us, if he give us Sun-shine dayes, when others have lived in troublesome times.* Say not then, *What are these Sermons of suffering to us, who are not exercised?* for they greatly concern thee, seeing that hereby thy heart is to be raised up to more thankfulness, to more joy in blessing and praising of God. Is it not a mercy that thou didst

not



not live in Queen *Maries* dayes; That thou art not one of those mentioned by the Apostle, *Who wandered in sheepskins and goatskins, who had no settled aboad or quietnesse in any place.* They did eat their bread with trembling, and drink with fear and astonishment, flying from one place to another, parents bereaved of children, husbands of wives. Now when thou shalt consider, what sad times many of the people of God have lived in, and thou hast daies of peace and abundance, Is not this like fire in thy bosome to inflame thee with the love of God, and constantly to blesse him?

Fifthly, *It is good to know the sufferings of others, though thou art freed, because none knoweth when the time of thy trial may come.* The times of the Churches peace, and of her troubles are in Gods hands, and these times are only known to himself; Thou knowest not what heavy sufferings thou mayest be put upon ere thou diest, and therefore it is good to be providing the whole armour of Christ, before the day of fighting doth approach. The Mariner hath not his instruments to provide in the midst of the storm, but he doth prepare for it: so neither is the souldier then to furnish himself with weapons, when the enemy is approaching to him. Do thou therefore hear much, know much, and be instructed much about the patience and sufferings of the Saints, that when God shall call thee to it, it may not seem a strange, and a new thing to thee.

*Use of Instruction,* not to be afraid to hear of, and know all the difficulties and calamities which will accompany the powerfull way of owning Christ. How carnal and self-seeking are our hearts, with the Disciples to flee from Christ, when he is carried to the Crosse? We would receive good from Christ, but not evil; whereas if thou dost consider it, thou shalt find the earthly and the worldly man is more afflicted and troubled in getting the things of the world, then thou in obtaining of Heaven; and what a shame is it, that they shall be more patient and enduring for these worldly goods, then thou art for heavenly? Doth not the earthly man say to his gold, what shall separate us from the love of it? Doth he not say, for the love of thee I am killed all the day long? This is the golden Image that every one falls down and worships. Oh then shame thy self, saying, How much can these suffer? How much can these bear, and for that which will damn them at last? But my carnal, fearfull heart is afraid to suffer for Christ, who will give me eternal glory. Shall the Devil have his martyrs, the world its sufferers, and shall not Christ have such as will leave all to have all by him again?





## S E R M. LIX.

*The Ministers of the Gospel find much opposition from the carnal and worldly Professors. Who are these carnal and worldly Professors.*

2 C O R. I. 8.

*Of our trouble, which came to us in Asia.*

**T**He next thing considerable in the Text, is the description of that tribulation which did fall upon the Apostle, which was so necessary and usefull to be known. In which we have,

1. The Nature of this exercise, expressed in the name it hath *Θλίψις*.
2. There is the place where, in *Asia*.
3. There is the aggravation of it. Of which in its time.

The exercise itself is called *Θλίψις*. *Beza* (in *Annotat. in Cor. cap. 13.*) saith, this word is properly rendred *affliction*, not tribulation, for that is *Θέρσις*, rather than *Θλίψις*. Hence he sheweth out of *Tully*, that *Affligo* is properly to throw a thing to the ground, so as to presse it down, and therefore is the same with *μελέω*. The word then signifieth not an ordinary trouble, but such as doth most strictly constringe and bind, pressing a man to the ground; and this he saith, did come upon him in *Asia*, *καὶ οὕτως*, not that it came by chance or fortune, or by the meer malice and power of men; no it came by the special appointment of God, in much wisdom and mercy, thereby propagating the Gospel. For afflictions are so many arrows delivered out of Gods quiver, which are sure to hit the mark they are destined unto. Here is no more difficulty in the words; only Expositors question, What this trouble was, he met with in *Asia*? Where may we find any thing about the particulars of it? *Cajetan* on the place acknowledgeth, That concerning this trouble in *Asia*, he could read nothing in any Book that was authentick; yet it seemeth not to refferre generally to all the troubles he met with in publishing of the Gospel, but to some eminent singular one; and therefore he saith, the *trouble*, not *troubles* in the plural number. Some learned men therefore refferre this to those passages mentioned in the former Epistle to the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. 16. 9. where he said, *A great door and effectual was opened to him at Ephesus*, (that was in *Asia* the lesse) *but there were many adversaries*; and there no doubt did endeavour to bring him into much danger. So 1 Cor. 15. 32. he is said there, *To fight with beasts at Ephesus*; whether he understand beasts truly and properly, or metaphorically, men as wild and as savage as beasts, all sheweth the extream danger he was in. It may seem probable, that the Apostle related to this: only it is objected, That the trouble here mentioned was but lately done, and such as the *Corinthians* had

not



not yet heard of. Therefore the general current of most Interpreters, do conclude, that the Apostle meaneth that danger he was in, mentioned *Acts 19.* by *Demetrius*, and others, when the whole City of *Ephesus* was in an uproar, because of the Temple of *Diana*, concerning which they so vehemently accused *Paul*; for there we read was a popular sedition, and the City was in a great confusion, *Demetrius* and his company were in a mad rage against *Paul*. So that although *Luke* doth not in particular mention the extream and grievous danger *Paul* was in, yet it may well be concluded from the general. Thus *Calvin*, and many others. So that this foundation being laid, and this supposed to be the trouble. We may observe,

*That the faithfull Ministers of the Gospel, are sure to meet with much opposition from all such, who regard Religion no further, than it maketh for their carnal advantage and interest.*

The faithfull Ministers of the Gospel are sure to meet with opposition from the world.

A necessary truth this is; for hereby every one, whose heart riseth against the powerfull preaching of the Word, may examine himself, What is the motive thereof? What is the cause thereof? Though he may pretend this specious colour, and that fair glosse, yet it is some lust or other, some carnal advantage or other, that doth indeed kindle that flame in his brest.

That this Doctrine may be the better conceived, let us take notice, What was the cause that brought this trouble upon *Paul* at *Ephesus*; and we shall there see, how the same causes do still make men mad, and bitter enemies against the wayes of God. The History we have related, *Acts 19.* from *vers. 23.* to the end of the Chapter: it is there declared, That no small stirre did arise about that way, that is, the Evangelical way, the Gospel way preached by *Paul*. The occasion whereof was by one *Demetrius* a silver-smith, which made silver shrines for *Diana*, that is, little Images, made for the worship of *Diana*, which was a trade of very great profit and advantage to him and others of the like craft; therefore he consults with them, and useth two arguments to enrage them.

First, That *their craft would be in danger.* The trade they lived upon would fall to the ground. And this certainly was that which did most prevail with him; and by this we see, how hard a matter it is to part with a profession or way of life, though never so sinfull, if it be a profitable way. The matter of profit will be like dust in our eyes to hinder our sight; it is ready to put out all spiritual discerning in the conscience between good and evil, just and unjust. So that we are greatly to suspect our hearts in those things, that are matter of profit to us, lest they deceive us therein.

The second Argument is religious: Though his heart be carnal, yet he runneth to the Sanctuary of Religion. The former Argument was too grosse, if it had been alone; and therefore he maketh Religion the greatest, The great Goddess *Diana* shall be despised; her magnificence destroyed. Now this he maketh a very hainous sinne, because all *Asia*, and the world worshipped her. Thus you see multitude, universality, and the custome of others, that is the great reason he hath to perswade for the worshipping of *Diana*, which is the same argument that carnal and superstitious people do still possesse their souls with.

So that from this historical passage, you see the Doctrine genuinely deduced, That men who regard Religion no further, than they have carnal advantages, are like so many Toads full of poison, full of rage against such as do faithfully preach the Gospel. Therefore in this very Chapter, we have a notable instance of the work of Gods grace upon some who believed, for they brought their



Books of curious Arts, which had been gainfull and profitable to them, and burnt them before all men, though the price of them was found to be fifty pieces of silver; They mattered not their gain, nor their profit, they would part with all, now they had received the Gospel in the power of it. We have a parallel History with this of *Demetrius*, Act. 16. 19. where there was a possessed Damsel, that had a spirit of divination, which brought her Masters much gain by soothsaying; but *Paul* adjureth and dispossesseth that spirit, whereupon it is said, *When her Masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone; They took Paul and Silas, and carried them to the Rulers, laying great crimes to their charge.* Thus if we do search to the true ground of all that malice which the Chief-priests vented against Christ, never ceasing till they had crucified him; although they pretended Religion, and because he spake blasphemy, and did break the Sabbath, yet the real cause was, because he discovered their hypocrisie and covetousnesse, manifesting that they sought only great things for themselves. This also *Paul* chargeth upon his enemies, the false Apostles, who did create so much trouble and grief to him, *That they were enemies to the crosse of Christ, and did mind earthly things*, Phil. 3. 19. Thus also Gal. 6. 12. *They made a show in the flesh, that they might not suffer persecution.*

But we come more more particularly to enlarge this. And

Two sorts  
which oppose  
the truth and  
wayes of  
Christ.

1. Such as take  
the true Reli-  
gion to be  
blasphemy  
and idolatry,  
or superstition  
the true ser-  
vice of God.

First, You may take notice, *That there are two sorts of persons who do with much violence and despite oppose the holy truths, and wayes of Christ.*

First, *Such who may have such an absolute blindnesse and meer error upon their mind, that they take the true Religion to be blasphemy and horrible reproach to God; and on the other side, they take Idolatry and superstition to be the only true service of God, and therefore that they cannot do more acceptable service unto God, then to oppose that way of Religion, which yet indeed is only approved of by God.* Of such our Saviour spake to his Disciples, *John 16. 2. Whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service;* and of this number was *Paul*, who professeth that he once thought himself bound to set against the Name of *Jesus of Nazareth*, Act. 26. 9. Here we see *Paul* so convinced in his judgement, that if he did not with all his power and might oppose the way of Christ, he thought, it would have been his great sinne. And thus no doubt it may be the case of many deluded Hereticks and Papists; so that they shall be perswaded there cannot be more acceptable work unto God, then that they should imprison and destroy those that do yet truly fear God. This ignorance upon them, though it may excuse in some degree, and make them lesse sinners, then such who do wilfully oppose, and do despite maliciously against the Spirit of grace, yet it doth not totally free them; nay they are persecutours for all that; as you see *Paul* acknowledged concerning himself. Now such enemies as these are acted by religious principles, but in a false way; they commonly are more zealous and implacable than any other. *Paul*, because it was not any carnal advantage or profit he sought after, but a meer zeal for the Religion he had by tradition from his fathers, therefore did he pursue the Christians in such a bloody furious manner. *Tantum Religio potuit, &c.* said the Poet: Oppositions against the wayes of God from such who are zealous and devout in their false wayes, are constantly more dreadfull and terrible than any others. So that we are again and again to try what spirit we are of, to examine, Whether it be the true Religion indeed that we give our selves up to the profession thereof. For if it be not, the greater zeal, the greater forwardnesse therein, is but the greater condemnation; and like the Traveller out of the way, the more thou runnest, the



the further thou goest from the true way. But

The second sort of enemies to the truths of Christ, which are farre the more numerous part, is of such, *Who are addicted to such a way and persuasion in Religion, not because of any Divine worke of Gods Spirit upon them, but because it suiteth with their carnal interest, it agreeth with their external profit*; and therefore they cry out, *Great is Diana*, when indeed in their heart they say, *Great is their wealth, great is their gain*; this is the *Diana*. We may justly charge this upon Popery. What was it that made *Luther*, and the other Reformers so odious to the Popish party? What made the Pope with his adherents, to breath nothing but fire and sword? Was it not because they touched the Popes Crowne, and the Monkes belly? Hence

Secondly, *The faithfull Ministers of the Gospel meet with opposition, not from the Pagans only that are without, but from the sonnes of the Church, which are within*; from those who professe the same God, the same faith, the same Christ with them. And the reason is, because many that professe Christ, do so for earthly and carnal respects; and such titular and counterfeited Christians as these, cannot but hate those that are genuine. The Apostle in the large Catalogue of his manifold sufferings, reckoneth this up amongst the rest, *Perils from false brethren*, 2 Cor. 11. 26. Thus in *Abrahams* family, there will be an *Ishmael* to persecute *Isaac*, because one is of the bond-woman; and the other of the free. Think not then, that the *Pagan* or *Jew*, will become enemies to the powerfull preaching of the Gospel, for every false Christian will. Every one that followeth Christ onely, because of loaves, or with *Judas*, becometh a Disciple, because of the bagge. Doth not experience confirme this, that the prophane Christian doth as bitterly rage at, and oppose the holy wayes of Christ, as any *Heathen* would doe? Thus the godly Ministers have trouble (as it were) from their own flock, their Sheep sometimes becomes Wolves and Beares to them; and with *Ezekiel*, *They dwell among Scorpions*, Ezekiel 2. 6.

Thirdly, *The carnal interest and earthy sinfull respects, are of divers sorts*; even as the creeping things that are produced from the earth are innumerable. As

1. *He knoweth Religion onely for carnal ends, though it be the true one, that turns the grace of God into wantonnesse; That cryes up Gospel truths onely to encourage themselves in a licentious way.* As many of the mixed multitude went out with the *Israelites* from *Aegypt*, yet kept their old and corrupt natures still; So in the first Reformation many came out [of *Rome* with the blessed Reformers; many gloried in the name of *Evangelici*, that they had shaken off the yoke of *Antichristianisme*; but at the same time, they did not cast off the yoke of sinne. The first Reformers sadly complained of such, that looked upon the Gospel, as the casting off not onely the Popes Laws, but Gods Law also; as if to renounce the Images and Masse had been enough, though in the mean time they did securely sleep in all wickednesse. Now from such as these, the Ministers of the Gospel have found as much unkindnesse and malice, as from their Popish adversaries: So that both at home and abroad, the Prophets of the Lord have been greatly afflicted. These spots in our feasts; these lovers of pleasures more than God; these are they that have in all places withstood the power and life of godlinesse, the holy Order and Discipline Christ hath instituted; as if the liberty *Paul* bids us stand fast in, were a liberty to sinne without controll, and an indulgence in all licentiousnesse. Such as these,

2. Such who professe religion, meerly because it suits with their carnal interests.

Hence the Ministers of the Gospel are not only opposed to those who are without, but by some within the Church.

Who are they which profess Religion meerly for carnal ends.

1. Such as live in their lusts.

when



when they come into the warme Sunne, when they have Summer, an opportunity in their hand will discover that they are Serpents, and will sting. *Tertullian* apologized of old, That the Christian Religion had her greatest enemies in Ale-houses and Brothel-houses; and thus still the powerfull way of godlinesse is opposed by those monsters in Christianity, that have the head of a Christian, but the heart and life of beasts; *Mulier formosa superne desinit in piscem*; Like those *Locusts*, Revel. 9. 6. that had faces like men, but teeth like Lions, and tailes like Scorpions. Thus how many have the face of Christians, but in heart, in lives are beasts all over? From these the Ministers of God have received much opposition.

2. Such as intend to advance themselves by it.

2. They know Religion onely after carnal respects, who intend to enrich and to advance themselves by it, take up the profession of it for no other end, but to gain thereby. As this *Demetrius* made him shrines; not so much out of devotion to *Diana*, as to increase his wealth. Our Saviour knowing such a self-seeking disposition was predominant in many, who proffered to be his Disciples, he therefore prevents their Hypocrisie and Apostasie, by telling them, *The Foxes have holes, but the Sonne of man hath not where to lay his head*; and requireth it as a fundamental qualification, *That he who would be his Disciple, must love Christ more than father and mother, and life it self*: Yea must not venture to winne the whole world, if thereby he should lose his soul. Oh take heed of this *Judas*, this treacherous disposition in thee, to be of the mind with those *Paul* speaketh of, who suppoied, *That gain is Godlinesse*, 1 Tim. 6. 5. Yea such are worse than *Judas*; for he sold Christ but once, thou doest continually; and he was grieved and troubled for what he had done; but thou, though thou preferrest earthy things all the day long before Christ, yet art not grieved in heart. Well, such as these are, will in case of profit and advantage, make all opposition against the preaching of the Gospel, when they cannot have Christ and their *Mammon* any longer, when their *Dagon* and *Ark* will consist no longer together, then you shall see all that poison vomited at the mouth, which before lay close up in the heart; then they will desire no Ministry, no Gospel, rather than be deprived of their gain.



SERM. LX.

*A further Discovery of such, who take up Religion meerly from carnal motives and worldly respects.*

2 COR. I. 8.

*Of our trouble, which came to us in Asia.*

**T**He word of God purely preached, with the faithfull Ministers thereof, meet with no greater opposition in the world, then from such who regard Religion, no further than it maketh for their carnal interests.

This truth hath been in part opened; and because every Christian unregenerated, doth upon some false and carnal motive or other, take up the profession of Christ, whereby when he is put to the denial of that earthly respect, he can then no longer hold, but breaketh out in opposition to the pure wayes of Christ. Therefore it is very usefull to give further *Characters* of such who regard Religion only upon interieur and worldly respects. And

First, *Such are led with corrupt respects, and in time of temptation will prove adversaries to the Ministers of the Gospel, who are not of a ready and prepared spirit, to take up the Crosse, and to follow Christ in whatsoever condition he shall command; such who are Christs Disciples onely in the Summer time, while there are Halcyon dayes and times of plenty and encouragement to be a Christian.* These when they are urged to part with all, to suffer, and to be undone for Christ, then they turn into any thing; they will oppose and contradict that way, which once they did imbrace and admire; yea they will become persecutours of such instruments of Gods glory, which once they did honour; and all this ariseth from the earthly and carnal heart, which made them at first look to Gods wayes, *Phil. 3. 18. Paul did with tears, and even weeping, speak of such, Who were enemies to the crosse of Christ, who minded earthly things.* So that by *Pauls* example, we see it is a thing to be bitterly mourned about, when we see men hopefully professing the true way of Christ; and then when adversity and persecution doth arise, they presently can change, and turn their faith again; They can withstand and contradict what once they pleaded for, and all because they are resolved to save themselves: They think *Gain is godlinesse.* Such an one as this, is an object greatly to be pitied, and mourned over; he loveth his ease, his liberty, his advantages more than Christ, and so is no wayes fit to be his Disciple. And for this reason it is our Saviour doth so often plainly, and in Parables urge all, to consider upon what termes they take up the profession of his name; he foretellet them of all the hardship and difficulties they must encounter with, that so they may not prove enemies at last, who in the beginning seem'd to be friends. Wonder not then to see this fall out often in the Christian Church, that those who were once friends, and went with us

More characters of such who professe Religion only upon worldly respects.

1. Such who in time of temptations prove adversaries to the Gospel and Ministry of it.



unto the house of God, afterwards to become like so many *Hazaels* to those who fear God. Alas, their earthly advantage, and the present world, hath made them change their opinions and affections: They never at first did own Christ upon sincere and pure motives, and therefore not being able to suffer for Christ, they set against him; and this alwayes falleth out, that he who is an Apostate from the true profession of Christ, doth become a cruel and bloody enemy of that way he once walked in. *Omnis Apostata est osor sui ordinis*, All Apostate persons, whether in Doctrine or Practice, are implacable adversaries to truth and holinesse. This hath been experimentally proved in all ages; and one reason is, because hereby they would be revenged upon those from whom they have departed; for their guilty conscience telleth them, they have justly incurred the censure of the godly; They have lost their repute and esteem, their good name is blasted; and this maketh them study all opposition and malignity that may be. Look then to thy motives at first, to those termes thou didst professe Christ at the beginning; if it was any humane or false motive, if it was not such an entire and enduring principle, that will not make thee stand upon a Rock immovable; Let any winds or tempests arise, as great a friend, and as forward a well-wisher, as now thou seemest to be for good things. Had we a propheticall discerning, we might with the Prophet look stedfastly upon thee, as he did on *Hazael*, and weep to think what enmity and mischief thou mayest create to such as fear God. This man taketh up the old Rule, *Ama tanquam osurus*; He loveth this way of Christ, so as thinking his outward advantages may sometimes or other make him hate it.

2. Such as maintain doctrines which overthrow the foundation of Religion.

Secondly, Such regard Religion only in a carnal way, Who though they may acknowledge some principles of the Christian Religion, yet at the same time maintain some damnable or heretical Doctrines that doe overthrow the very foundation. Such as these take up Religion with carnal motives, and so in time become cruel enemies to the faithfull Guides, that are in Gods Church. Wonder not that I make an Heretick to regard Religion after the flesh; for *Galat. 5. 20*. Heresies are reckoned a fruit of the flesh. Inso much that *Austin* made it an ingredient into the definition of an Heretick, that he either beget or propagate false opinions, *Alienius temporales commodi causa*, for some temporal advantage. And although we cannot say thus of all, because God in just judgement doth deliver up some who receive not the truth in the love of it, to efficacy of error, to strong delusions, that they should believe a lie, *1 Thess. 2. 10, 11*. yet this very delusion upon their judgement, this error and blindness upon their mind, is of the flesh. For you must know, that the flesh, or to be carnal, doth not in the Scripture signifie the pollution upon the sensitive and bodily part only, but also upon the intellectual and rational: It's a fleshly mind, as well as fleshly affections. Thus all such, who though they do retain some principles of the Christian faith, doe yet believe other damnable Doctrines, these are Religions only in a carnal respect; and thereupon when occasion serveth, do manifest the rancour and malice that is in their heart against the truths of Christ. Ecclesiastical History informeth us, of the bloody cruelty, which the *Arrians* exercised against the Orthodox, when they had power in their hands. The *Paganish* persecutions were not much superior to the Heretical. Yea, as it is said, amongst brethren discord is the more vehement and flaming than any other: So it is amongst these that pretend to be of the same Church of God. So that we ought to walk humbly, and to pray earnestly unto God, to keep our hearts, to enlighten our minds, to give us tenderness and lowliness of mind, that we be not led aside with



with the errour of the wicked; for errour and heresie will break out into enmity, and make men think they do God good service, while they destroy you.

Thirdly, Then we regard Religion after a carnal manner, *When we make parties in it, when we promote factions and divisions, and such as do so are filled with much spite and malice against those that are contrary to them.* This is a sinne the members of the Church are prone to, and nothing inclineth more to oppositions and contentions, then such a frame upon mens spirits. The Apostle speaketh very clearly to this, 1 Cor. 3. 3. *Whereas there is among you envying and strife; one is for Paul, another for Apollo, are ye not carnal? And vers. 4. Again, are ye not carnal?* So that this doth plainly discover men not to be led by divine and holy principles, who are apt to foment differences, who are ready to set up one Minister against another; to admire the gifts and abilities of one to the contempt of others. This was the great sinne of these Corinthians, that as they discovered much pride and ambition in the names which they gave persons, (*Capellus Histor. A. M. 3168.*) sometimes delighting in words, which signified power and principality, as *Hegemon*, &c. Or such as denoted victory, as *Nicolaus*, &c. Or such as declared glory, as *Polycletus*, &c. Thus such a carnal ambition did still remain in them, though made Christians, setting up and admiring mens persons, looking after gifts which brought applause more than grace and sanctification. Now those that are thus carnally affected, they do continually throw balls of fire into the Church, and make it a *Babylon* in stead of a *Jerusalem*. Jude speaketh, *vers. 16. Of having mens persons in admiration, because of advantage.* It is some carnal advantage or other that maketh them advance this and that man against others. What the issue of such divisions is, appeareth *Jam. 3. 14, 15, 16. viz. To bring in all confusion, and every evil work.* As also he sheweth the nature and cause of this, *It is earthly, sensual and devilish*, though men may judge it zeal, and think they are active for Gods glory, yet it's sensual, and cometh from the Devil; and it is good to observe how largely the Apostle expatiateth about the sinfulness of the tongue, *That a world of evil is in it*; and from that exhortation, *Be not many Masters*; that is, do not take upon you to be Teachers, and so to reprove and censure others in a carnal and sinfull way. It is this that maketh not only the tongue, but the pen also to be full of gall and wormwood; it maketh the pen to be an unruly evil, that none can tame. Take we heed then of minding Religion onely to make parties, and different wayes therein; for this will at last break into an open enmity against the truly godly.

3. Such as make parties and factions in the Church.

Fourthly, Then we look after Religion in a carnal way, *When we make use of the Doctrine thereof onely to shew our parts or learning; when we earnestly contend about it, as it is our opinion, not as it is Gods truth.* For this reason the Apostle doth so frequently exhort Timothy, *To take heed of disputes, and vain janglings*, 1 Tim. 1. 6. where the end of the preaching of the Gospel, is said to be *Charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, with faith unfeigned*; but from these some did swerve, by turning aside unto vaine jangling. Here you see, that those who have not pure and unfeigned hearts in the things of God, they fall into vain disputes and quarrels. So 2 Tim. 2. 4. it is called, *Doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, railings, and evil surmises*. And he addeth their character, *Supposing that gain is godlinesse*. Here you see, that in all these disputes and controversies there is no pure heart, no good conscience, all is to advantage themselves by it: yea if this be not discovered in any sordid or worldly manner, yet if thy pride, the loftiness of thy spirit be hereby advanced, and thou dost not mind Religion, to exercise thy self to godlinesse, but to have men admire thy gifts, and to wonder at thy

4. Such who make use of the Doctrine of the Gospel only to shew their parts and learning.



thy abilities: Thy heart is a corrupt heart, and thou wilt manifest thy enmity against the wayes of Christ, when opposed therein. Thy wit, thy parts, thy applause, thou mayest make thy great *Diana*, and oppose all that would destroy this Goddesse.

5. Such as do not own Religion upon divine principles and holy motives.

Lastly, That we may conclude all, and leave nothing out, *Whosoever doth not own the Christian faith from divine principles, and holy pure motives, this man is but a titular, and a false Christian, and so cannot, but when occasion serveth manifest his opposition to Christs wayes.* And therefore it is, that as amongst the people of *Israel* there was an irreconcilable division between *Israel* and *Judah*, and a great opposition between *Dauids* house and *Sauls*; though all pretending to the onely true God: So it is in the Church of God, though there may be an agreement in the same Doctrine, in the same Profession of faith; come to the same Ordinances together, yet because one hath not a supernatural life of grace within, hath no experimental feeling of the power of sanctification upon his soul; hence it is that he hath a spirit of antipathy and contrariety to those who are indeed born of God, and walk in wayes of mortification. So that we may conclude, *Whosoever is not regenerated, regardeth Religion no further than carnal and earthly respects, let his pretences be never so high and plausible.* And therefore there is no unconverted man, though he hath never so high an Office, never so great repute in the Church of God, but he serveth Christ for loaves; some insincere and insufficient motive or other worketh upon him; he hath his shrines that he liveth by. And therefore as it was with that rich man, who boasted, *He had kept all Gods Commandments from the youth*, when he was tryed in one instance, where his heart was greatly affected, *viz. To part with all, and follow Christ*, it is said, *He went away exceeding sorrowfull.* Thus when any such empty, nominal Christians are put upon such duties and wayes, which are contrary to their lusts, they will go away, not it may be exceedingly grieved, but greatly enraged and disquieted: This will be like the jealousy-water, to discover the adulteresse. To pull out their right eyes, and to cut off their right hands, will be like the pronouncing of *Shibboleth*, to discover what they are. And the ground of this whole truth is from the exceeding great purity and exactnesse that is in the word of God truly preached, it cometh to new mould, and change the whole man, *All old things must passe away*; This will not abide either a corrupt mind, or a carnal heart; and therefore one being contrary to the other, as light to darknesse, and fire to water. No wonder if then the hypocrite be unmasked, and the carnal heart discovered. The Gospel either conquers men, and maketh them friends, or else leaveth them more provoked enemies; but the fault is not in the Gospel preached, neither are faithfull Ministers the troublers of *Israel*, but thy whoredoms, thy idolatries, thy lusts are the cause of all this combat.

*Use of Instruction*, what all godly Ministers, and private Christians, who are zealous against sinne must look for, not from *Pagans* and *Heathens*, but false carnal Christians, that regard no Religion any further then their lusts or advantages may be kept up. Will those that live by the sinnes of people, ever be willing to have sinne destroyed? Do not many as *Demetrius* say, If this way of Religion go on, we shall not be able to live any longer? And therefore they flie with open mouth against all holy order, and good discipline against sinne. But know thou that all thy prophanenesse and dissolutenesse doth not so much provoke God, as thy opposition of the Gospel, and the Ministers thereof. Yea we see *Paul* using a divine imprecation against such in this case, which neither Christ or *Stephen* ever used against those that did put them to death, *2 Tim. 4. 14. Alexander the copper-smith did me much evil.* And afterwards he instanteth wherein, *He hath greatly withstood our words, or preachings.* It was not any



any personal, or temporal evil that moved *Paul*, but the withstanding of his preaching; whereupon he poureth out this prayer, *The Lord reward him according to his worke*. Oh dreadfull and terrible imprecation, especially coming from one acted by the Spirit of God in delivering of it!

Use 2. To exhort us seriously and impartially to examine our selves about our motives and grounds, which make us to take up the title of Christianity. Is it for fear, or because of custome, the Laws of the Land require it? Doest thou not find the divine power of holy truths upon thy soul? Then know thy Religion is like thy life, a bubble, a vapour that will quickly go out: Especially we are the more diligently to observe our hearts, when we have any profit or preferment, when we have any external accomodations by our profession. Oh how hard is it then to discern between true and counterfeit, whether it be the truth of God, the love of God, or thy own interest that prevaieth with thee, when thy enemies and adversaries shall charge thee with it! What a comfort will it be, when thy conscience upon good ground can clear thee?



## SERM, LXI.

### *Of the different judgement that Faith and Flesh passe upon Afflictions.*

2 COR. I. 8.

*That we were pressed above measure,*

**W**E have already considered this trouble which came upon *Paul* in *Asia*, in respect of the occasion of it. Let us proceed to the Aggravation of it; For out of the strong cometh sweet. From this affliction conquered doth arise much encouragement and consolation to those that are followers of *Paul*.

And in the Description, we have the Aggravation of it from the Quantity:

1. *We were pressed out of measure.*
2. The Quality, *Above measure.*
3. From the Event, *So that we despaired of life.* And in the next verse it is further illustrated from a two-fold end; of which in its time.

Let us take notice of the first particular; wherein we have this trouble heightened, viz. from the Quantity or Extension of it, It was *above measure*, *ὑπὲρ μέτρον*. The word *ὑπὲρ* and *ὑπερμετρίως*, is applied sometimes to the enduring of a burden, *Matth. 20. 12. Gal. 6. 2.* whether it be a temporal burden, or a spiritual. Sometimes it is applied to the heaviness of the eyes by drowsiness, *Mark 14. 40.* In this place it seemeth to be taken from Porters, who have a burden imposed upon them more than they are able to stand under: or as *Chrysostome*, from ships who are overmuch burdened, and so are in danger of being lost: And as if there were not emphasis enough in the word pressed, he addeth another



another to aggravate it, καὶ ὑπερβολῶς. Pareus saith, *The Scripture never useth an hyperbole, because that strictly taken is a lie.* But this opinion cannot be justified, neither is an hyperbole, if you do regard the intention of the speaker a lie. For such an expression he meaneth not so much the thing signified by the words; as when the Evangelist saith, *The world would not contain all the books that might be written about Christs deeds;* but thereby to represent to the Reader some further degree, then ordinarily is in other things. But the Apostle doth not here speak of a verbal hyperbole, but a real one, that which was above expression. The Apostle useth this expression, when he speaketh of the riches of Gods grace and power to believers, 2 Cor. 9. 14. Ephes. 2. 7. Eph. 1. 19. No ordinary expression will serve Paul, when he cometh to speak of the admirable, and wonderfull riches of Gods grace, to those that do believe in him. As he thus speaketh of the grace of the Gospel, so also of his own sinfulness, both original and actual, there is an hyperbole in both, Rom. 7. 13. Original sinne improved and excited by the Commandment, is said to be καὶ ὑπερβολῶς ἀμαρτωλὸς, *Above measure sinfull;* and for his actual wickednesse and impiety, Gal. 1. 13. there he saith, *He did καὶ ὑπερβολῶς, persecute the Church;* but when he cometh to speak of the glory in Heaven, there one hyperbole will not serve, according to that of Luther, *Cælum & infernus, non patiuntur hyperbolen;* but there he addeth, καὶ ὑπερβολῶς εἰς ὑπερβολῶς.

By the expression then in the Text we see, That this trouble the Apostle was exercised with, was no little inferiour trouble, but that which was of the most pressing nature that could be, that was out of measure heavy and burdensome.

But you will say, *How doth this agree with that which we have Paul speaking in the 4<sup>th</sup> Chapter of this Epistle, where he calleth all the afflictions that do befall the godly, light, Our light affliction, vers. 17. Can it be light, and yet out of measure heavy also?*

How the afflictions of the godly may be called heavy, and yet light.

It may be answered and reconciled thus, It is called *light* in respect of everlasting glory. So that although it be exceeding heavy and pressing in it self, yet if compared with the weight of glory hereafter, so it is *light*. Or

Secondly, It may be answered, By distinguishing of the times, when Paul calleth his affliction *heavy*, it relateth to the time, that he was exercised with it. For Christianity doth not require *Stoicism*, yea patience is the more admirable, by how much the more apprehensive we are of the trouble upon us. Thus the Apostle, Heb. 12. 11. *No chastisement is joyous for the present, but grievous.* Or,

Thirdly, We may speak of afflictions when they are over, when we are delivered from them, and find the great good they have done to us, then we may call them *light*, and judge them nothing to the benefit we received by them. But

In the fourth place, I conceive that the most genuine answer is, That Paul doth here speak of his trouble according to the sense and apprehension of his flesh; even as afterwards he saith, *It was above his strength,* that is, his humane, natural strength, as will appear afterwards. If therefore flesh and blood be consulted with, then Paul saith, *It is an affliction above measure;* but then at vers. 17. of the 2 Cor. 4. as also in other places, he speaketh according to the workings of faith, and the operations of Gods Spirit within him. So that a godly man speaketh one thing according to the flesh, and another thing according to the Spirit. That is bitter and heavy to the flesh, which may be sweet and welcome to the Spirit. From whence observe,

Godly men judge otherwise of their afflictions from sense and flesh, then from grace and reason.

*That godly men judge otherwise of their afflictions by the principles of sense and flesh in them, then they do by the principles of grace and reason in them.*

Paul



Paul calleth it, *An affliction above measure*, in the lower sphere of nature; but again he calleth it, *A light one*, in the higher sphere of grace. Even as an Astronomer, beholding the Sunne with his bodily eye, judgeth it lesse than the Earth; but, then again, beholding it with the instruments of Art, doth conclude, that it is many degrees bigger than the Earth. Thus the godly man, while he thinketh and speaketh according to the law of the flesh within him, he cryeth out of his burdens, he is discontented at them, he looketh at them as destructive: but then again, when the same man considereth them by the principles of faith, and Scripture-grounds, then he seeth that those stones may be turned into bread; and from these thorns he may gather grapes. Even as we see in Christ, because he had two distinct Natures in a personal Union; therefore we say, Christ died, Christ was in agonies, and that because of his humane Nature; yea it is called, *The blood of God*. And again on the other side, Christ is said to be God, to create the world, to raise himself from the dead, and that because of his Divine Nature. As he was *Sonne of God*, so he was full of power and might upon the earth; As he was the *Sonne of man*, so he was subject to weaknesse and infirmity. Now here was no impossibility or repugnancy, that it should be thus different with Christ under several respects. Thus also it is with every member of Christ; As he is born of God, so he puts forth divine and gracious operations; but as he doth still retain some reliques of his old birth: So there are sinfull and infirm actions coming from him. Therefore when a godly man doth any thing, we must consider from what fountain it is, either the sweet fountain, or the bitter fountain that it floweth from.

To discover this truth:

First, We must know, *That in every regenerate man, there are two selves, (as it were) the carnal self, and the spiritual self*; From which issue all the works we do, *Galat. 5. 17. and also Rom. 7.* For although *Amynaldus Expos. in cap. 7. ad Rom.* (yet professing both against *Sacianians* and *Arminians*) doth industriously labour to understand it of a man only legally wrought upon, and that it would be a dishonour to *Paul*, and injurious to the work of Sanctification, to affirm, That *Paul* speaketh those things in his own person while regenerated: yet by that Text in the *Galatians*, Chap. 5. 17. it is plain, That those who are godly like *Rebeccah*, have these two twins struggling in their womb; and that as a man consisting of soul and body, we may say, he is mortal and immortal, visible and invisible; in different respects mortal and visible, in respect of his body; but immortal and invisible, in respect of his soul. Thus also it is with a godly man in a theological consideration; he hath both corruption and grace, he hath both flesh and spirit. Now although this be so, yet a godly man is not to be called an unregenerate person, as well as a regenerate; a sinner and a wicked person, as well as holy; Because denominations are alwayes from the more noble part; and this corruption, though remaining, yet is to be subdued and conquered. Even as *Canaan* might be called the possession and inheritance of the *Israelites*, although many *Je-busites* did still continue therein, and could not be cast out. Let not then any godly man look for such perfection in this life, as to have only one principle within him, and that of grace. Do not look that it should be altogether as the Spirit will have it in thee, not finding the least opposition, or remency from the flesh: No, this estate is to be enjoyed onely in Heaven.

Secondly, *As these two selves, or principles are in a man, that is regenerate, so they doe actually oppose and contradict one another.* Hence cometh that Christian combate and conflict which the godly find within themselves.

Propositions clearing the truth.  
There are two selves in every regenerate man.

2. These two selves oppose one another.

Not



Not like that of the Heathens, *Aristotles* incontinent person, or the Poets *Medea*, a conflict between reason, and their lusts only. But this opposition is universal and diffusive in every part of the soul. The carnal part in the mind opposeth the spiritual. The carnal part of the will contradicteth the spiritual. So that they have heart against heart, affections against affections. We are not therefore to conceive of these two principles, as dormant and latent in the soul, but they are as fire and water in the same subject, labouring to expell each other; and according to the three-fold estate or degree, that we may conceive in persons regenerate, so is this fight and congress more or lesse vehement.

The first degree is of such who are newly converted. These although in Regeneration, they have the seed and root of all grace, yet because of their former custom in evil wayes cannot so immediately conquer and subdue their lusts; and therefore like children that begin to walk, because of their feebleness they get many falls.

A second degree is of those, who are in some measure proficient, and have obtained much victory over sinne. And although in such there be many combates, yet grace hath the possession of the whole man, notwithstanding the many assaults made against it. And then

Lastly, There are such, whom the Scripture calls *perfect*, not *absolutely*, but *comparatively* to others, because they are as Gyants, when others are but Dwarfs; these are said, *To have their senses exercised to discern between good and evil*. Now such, although they do overcome the world, and the Devil by faith, yet they are not free from this combat within. It is true, some think, that though it be granted that *Paul*, Rom. 7. speaketh in the person of a regenerate man, yet it is of one in the lowest forme, that is but newly come into the state of Christianity. And *Amyraldus* doth therefore think *Paul* cannot mean those things of himself, because he had attained to an higher degree of grace: Inasmuch that he inviteth others to follow him, and to take him for an example. Hence he is said to know nothing by himself: Whereby the same Authour concludeth, That there would be no blame or fault to be found with that man, who should say, *Paul had as much grace here in this life, as some shall have in the world to come*. But although we grant *Paul* to be among other Christians, like *Saul* among other men, higher by the shoulders, yet that he did find the rebellion and corruption of the flesh debasing his best duties, appeareth by his *accounting all things drosse, and desiring to be found in the righteousness of Christ*, Phil. 3. 8. So that while these endeavour to exalt the sanctifying grace of God in *Paul*, they eclipse his justifying; and while they advance his inherent righteousness, they obscure his imputed righteousness. Whether *Paul* then, or any other eminent servant of God, *They all find a law of sinne within them, rebelling against the law of the mind*; by which they look upon themselves as miserable captives, and do groan for a perfect and full redemption by Christ.

3. Hence 'tis good to observe from which of those principles our actions proceed.

Thirdly, *These two principles therefore not onely residing in them, but acting contrarily, it is very necessary in a Christian, exactly to observe, to what mother (as it were) the child doth belong*. To which principle thou art to attribute thy actions. For the not duly dividing and separating here, doth many times cause great confusion in the godly soul. We see it many times in *David's Psalmes*, that there are such different expressions, sometimes of faith and joy, and then again of diffidence and dejection, that we would not think the *Psalm* was made by the same man; we would think there were contradictions, and all, because sometimes it is the voice of *Esau*, and sometimes the voice of *Jacob*, (as I may so say;) Sometimes



times grace speaketh, and sometimes the filth speaketh. In the Disciples also our Saviour taketh notice of this, and thereby excuseth them, saying, *The Spirit is willing*, Matth. 26. 41. Now although it is very necessary in all our practicals to go to the bottome, to know what is of the flesh, and what is of the Spirit; yet in the matter of afflictions, and our bearing of them, there we are much more to attend to it. For afflictions being grievous to flesh and blood, draweth out the corruptions thereof very much. So that the voice of the flesh is many times farre louder than the voice of the Spirit, which maketh the godly ready to conclude, that they are nothing but flesh, that they have not the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them, because they feel so much distrust, so much diffidence and disquietness of heart within them.

More usefull particulars are to be insisted upon; only for the present, let those who truly fear God, make this Use of the Doctrine, viz. Not to conclude concerning their estate, as if it were wholly carnal, because they feel the struglings and motions of sinfull flesh within them; let them not despair, if they feel that they cannot alwayes keep up spiritual apprehensions about their afflictions; if they cannot say, I bless God for these chastisements, I see the great advantage cometh to me by them. Though they appear like anger, yet they are indeed the effects of love. If this be not alwayes the blessed and serene disposition of thy soul, but thy flesh like *Job's wife* provoketh thee to charge God foolishly, to be impatient and diffident; remember that you have a two-fold self, a carnal self, and a spiritual self; one saith one thing, and another saith another thing. It is as impossible to have a mans own heart free from divisions, as it is for the Church of God. That which saith saith is *light*, flesh saith is *heavy*. That which saith rejoyceth at, flesh repineth at. Thus it hath been, and thus it will be with the generation of those that seek God.



## SERM. LXII.

*How the voice of the Spirit, and the voice of the Flesh differ in Afflictions: And why it is necessary a man should know them asunder.*

2 Cor. 1. 8.

*That we were pressed above measure,*

**F**rom the Explication of this passage, we have observed, That it is one thing what a godly man speaketh according to the principle of flesh and blood within him, and another thing what he saith according to faith, and the principle of grace. And because this truth is of perpetual practical use, let us a little more dilate upon it. And

First, Let us instance in some discoveries, whereby we may know when flesh

N n

speaketh



How we may know when faith, and when flesh speaketh in our afflictions. 1. Flesh argues from afflictions, that God hath forsaken us.

speaketh, and when the Spirit doth. For these, though contrary one to another, yet are not discerned without spiritual illuminations, and senses exercised to know things that differ. And

First, *The voice of flesh and blood in such kind of troubles, is to make a final conclusion and sentence upon our selves, That God hath forsaken us, that we are cast out from his love.* Infomuch that did not the principle of grace in some measure withstand, and at some times overcome these temptations, the soul would be swallowed up in this whirlpool: but let the godly know, that this is not the voice of *Jacob*, but of *Esau*. The regenerate principle will not, dare not give in such false testimony, *Isai. 49. 14, 15. Zion hath said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.* But in the next verse we see God expressly denying it, and that not only, he had not forsaken her, but that he *could not forsake her*, for his affections were more to her, then any mothers to her sucking child. The Church then was too hasty and precipitate, she should have considered Gods Word, before she passed such a peremptory sentence concerning her self. Therefore when God saith one thing, and thy heart another; when the Scripture speaketh one thing, and thy flesh another thing, which is more to be regarded? See this distemper likewise in *Jonah*, Chap. 2. 6. *Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight.* Here the corrupt part in *Jonah*, made quick his desperate work, *He was cast out of Gods sight*, but *Nubecula fuit, cito transiit*; it was a little storm, it was presently over; for immediately he doth (as it were) contradict himself, and saith, *I will look again toward thy holy Temple.* So that it was with corruption and grace at this time, as it was with *Rebeccah* in her child-bearing; the first came out red and hairy, but the second came out smooth, and holding *Esau* by the heel. Thus the first motion of *Jonah's* heart cometh forth red and hairy, bloody and rough; but then saith like *Jacob* followeth this *Esau* immediately, and supplants it. When therefore the godly do at any time find such motions, and workings of heart, as if their troubles were a demonstration of Gods desertion of them, that if he loved them, he would never let it be so with them, rebuke these immediately, and be as much affected as *Hezekiah* was, when he heard *Rabsakeh* blaspheme God. For indeed such thoughts do highly dishonour God, and represent him otherwise than he is. For the Apostle directed by the Spirit of God, which searcheth the deep things of God, speaketh far otherwise, making these troubles to be an effect of his love, and that if he did not deal thus with us, we might then conclude, we did not belong to him. *Heb. 12. 6, 7, 8. If ye be without chastening, ye are bastards, and no children, for whom he loveth he chasteneth.* It behoveth thee to make this difference in thy self, else thy destruction will come upon thee suddenly.

2. Flesh saith, afflictions will undo us.

Secondly, *The voice of flesh and blood also speaketh after this manner in heavy troubles, That they will undo thee, that there can never come any good out of this to thy self; that it would have been farre better for soul and body, if the Lords hand had not been in this manner upon thee.* Here also that false and corrupt principle is a liar within thee. For *David*, who at sometimes is apt enough to be cast down, and exceedingly troubled, yet upon his recoveries can say, *Out of very faithfulness thou hast afflicted me; and before I was afflicted I went astray, Psal. 119. 75, 67.* Thou shouldest therefore do as the Apostle in another case, making objections against Gods dispensations, *Rom. 3. 5. saith, Is God unrighteous?* And then correcteth his speech, *I speak as a man.* Thus art thou also bound in all the unfavoury workings and discontents of thy soul, to rebuke thy self, saying, I think now as a man, I speak as a corrupt sinfull man. Yea *David*, getting some power against these sinfull motions within him, abhorreth himself in an higher degree, *Psal. 73. 22. So foolish was I and ignorant, even like a beast before thee.* Harken not then to those tumultuous thoughts and reasonings within thee, which would



would perswade thee, that there can never any good come to thee out of the present evil upon thee, that God cannot create light out of this darkness. For as *Adam* was undone by hearkning to *Eve*, and yeelding to her temptation: Thus flesh is like an *Eve* within thee, that will betray and destroy all at last.

Thirdly, *Flesh and blood under these heavy troubles, doth also speak sinfully about the Perpetuity of them; as if after such a black night, there would never arise a fair day.* This froward and peevish corruption within thee, saith, *It will never be otherwise.* Thus it spake in *David*, when he said, *I shall one day perish by the house of Saul.* Yea in several *Psalms*, the Church complaineth, *As if God had cast off for ever, and that he would remember her no more.* Thus the corrupt principle lieth continually in thy bosome, not like a *Dalilah*, enticing and deceiving, but like a thorn in thy side daily vexing and tormenting of thee. *David* being experimentally exercised, both in the sense of corruption, and also in the sense of grace, we find him sometimes speaking this voice within him, *Psal. 31. 22. I said in my haste, I am cut off from thine eyes. Psal. 94. 18. When I said, my foot slippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up. Psal. 116. 11. I said in my haste all men are liars.* By these instances we see, what an hasty principle a man hath within him under troubles. For, who can expect to have a better heart than *David*, that was after Gods own heart? and yet we hear him often complaining, that in his haste he was ready to speak such and such things, especially that there would never come any help to him, and that the Prophets of God were but liars, deceiving him with vain hopes. But the voice of Gods Spirit speaketh farre otherwise, in a more calm and sweet manner. As it was in the vision to *Elijah*, God was not in the fire, nor in the tempest, but in the still voice: So commonly grace is not seen in those hasty, boisterous, impetuous thoughts, but in a more serene and calm way. Now (I say) if we sit still, and hear what God speaketh to his people in such great pressures, it is the clean contrary, *Isa. 54. 7. As it were for a little moment have I forsaken, but with everlasting kindnesse will I have mercy on thee.* We see the holy practice of *Habakkuk* likewise notably to this purpose, *Habak. 2. 1, 3.* Because God did delay, he would stand upon the Tower, and watch to see what God would say to him. Thus do thou in thy expectations of deliverance.

3. Flesh saith, our afflictions will never end

Fourthly, *The principle of flesh and blood doth notoriously presse to do any sinfull action, neglect any duty, so that we may come out of such troubles.* And this affection or sense within a man hath a most immediate opposition to the work of grace within him. It is with the flesh in this case, as it was with *Peter* to our Saviour, *Master* (saith he) *save thy self;* But with what indignation did Christ rebuke him, saying, *Get thee behind me Satan?* *Mat. 16. 23.* *for thou savourest not the things of God, but of man.* Such a *Peter*, such a *Satan* is the flesh to thee, that saith, *Save thy self,* do any thing to escape these troubles: It is not any matter for righteousness or holiness, but look to thy safety. When these whisperings are within thy heart, then rise up in an holy zeal against them: Say, *Get thee behind me Satan;* This is not to favour the things of God. Had *David* been filled with such holy zeal, as he was sometimes, against his wife *Michol*, despising him for his adoration of God, then he had not used so many unlawfull shifts as he did to escape danger; his counterfeiting himself mad, his pretending to joyn with *Achish*, and to fight against *Israel*. These were sad snares that he fell into, because he did not ask counsel of the Lord, but consulted only with flesh and blood. Do thou then in thy troubles, as *Paul* in his extraordinary Call, *Obeying immediately the heavenly vision, and not consulting with flesh and blood.* In thy troubles

4. Flesh would put us upon any means to get out of trouble.



wait on God, take his way, put not forth thy hand to any sinne: Say, it is better to have misery upon thee, then the guilt of sinne. It was *Abrahams* defect of faith, though he was the *Father of the faithfull*, and though his faith staggered not in the trial about offering up of his sonne, yet in a farre more inferiour, and less temptation, there he began to reel out of the way, and from carnal fear did use sinfull equivocation to *Abimelech*, saying, *Sarah was his sister*, when she was his wife. This unlawfull shift he used to prevent those things he feared. But as *Jonah* could observe by his own experience, *Jon. 3. 8.* So it will always prove true, Those that observe lying vanities, forsake their own mercies, when we take not Gods way, we forsake that mercy we might have had, and so make our selves miserable for fear of misery. *Raynardus* the *Jesuite*, (*Lib. de Mart. part. 1. cap. 21.*) reckoning up several kinds of *Martyrs*, that may be called so in a large, and an improper sense, doth out of *Austin*, and more profusely out of *Chrysostome* shew, That those Christians who lay in great pains, and extream diseases, and yet would not use such superstitious and magical remedies that happily might have healed them, but would die rather than take any one of these medicines, highly commending their faith and patience, were accounted Martyrs; he is *Martyr in lecto*, who dieth of his pain, and his disease rather than he will use magical helps to be cured. It seemeth in the dayes of those Fathers, there was that wicked practice, which is now also too much used by many ungodly wretches, by going to Wisemen and Wizards, in their diseases, and to make use of their superstitious remedies to cure them. But as the zeal of these Ancients did burn like fire against such unjustifiable wayes, so do they highly commend the patience and mortification of such, who would rather die than be healed in this manner, making it in some sense an holy Martyrdom. I bring this, not only to put them to confusion who are guilty of such sinnes, but to confirm the truth I intended, That whatsoever flesh and blood doth suggest, yet faith and grace will make a man go through any troubles, rather than do that which is unlawfull, to come out of trouble.

s. Flesh only attends to what is troublesome and grievous in afflictions.

Lastly, *The flesh within a man doth only attend to what is troublesome and grievous, yea aggravateth and heightens every thing, as if there were no promise, no Christ, no grace, or promise from God to relie upon.* So that this corrupt principle maketh them like those, who by continual and stedfast looking upon the water, have their apprehensions disturbed, so that they know not where they are. It's flesh and blood in *Paul*, that maketh him put this hyperbole upon the trouble he was in. For although no doubt, it was in it self very great, and more than ordinary, yet *Paul* at another time saith, *I know how to abound, and how to want; I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me*, *Phil. 4. 12, 13.* Here you see he accounteth nothing too great for him, nothing above his strength. Again at another time in this Epistle, *Chap. 12. 10.* he is not afraid to say, *When he is weak, then he is strong.* So that corrupt flesh is apt to make a man look only at that which is grievous and troublesome; it maketh a man attend only to the dark and displeasing part in the affliction; whereas faith would shew us the clear and comfortable part also. The flesh doth with us, as the Devil with possessed persons, he kept the *Demoniack* alwayes in the Tombs and Monuments about sad objects. Thus that corrupt part in a man, detaineth us about those things which are sad and desolate: And as a man looking upon any thing through water, it seemeth as big again, as it would out of water: So every thing to the sadden and afflicted spirit appeareth double or treble to what it is, whereas faith would make us lay all things together; lay the good and the bad together; regard the flowers as well as the thistles. And thus much may suffice about the tongue of the flesh speaking in a godly man, while he is under burdens, which like that tongue the



the Apostle James speaketh of, *Is an unruly evil, Chap. 3. 6, 7. set on fire of hell, full of deadly poison,*

In the next place, Let us consider, why it is so usefull for a godly man, exactly to study and know himself, that he may be able to discern between flesh and spirit within him. And

First, If he do not make this distinction, *He will quickly passe a false sentence of condemnation upon himself, Because he finds the flesh speaketh within him after that disquieting manner, he will conclude that he is nothing but flesh.* It is from want of spiritual discerning herein, that so many tender hearts are discouraged and hopeles under their troubles. For they say, If the Spirit of Christ did work and breath in them, how could there be such carnal froward and impetuous risings of heart? Now all this is, because they give both ears (like an unwise Judge) to one party, and do not keep one for the other also, to see what that can say; hear what the groans and desires of grace speak, as well as the sinfull motions of the flesh within thee. *Paul, Rom. 7. when he had largely discovered this combate of flesh, and the Law of the mind within him, yet doth never give the flesh the total predominancy over him; he maketh it but a part, and the inferiour part, I know that in me, vers. 18. dwelleth no good; but lest this should be thought his whole self, he telleth us what he meaneth by that me, even my flesh, and concludeth the Chapter, So then with the mind I my self serve the Law of God, but with the flesh the Law of sinne.* Let the godly soul then in all its exercises, acknowledge this distinction: Do not say, thy whole self is carnal, because part is: Say not all the field is weeds, because some are in it.

Secondly, *Hereby we shall be able to prevent the end and drift of Satan, who is so busie in these troubled waters.* For what would he work out of all these confusions in thy soul, but to presse thee to despair, to judge thy condition hopeles? Why should I wait upon the Lord any longer? To say as *Cain, My sinnes are greater than I can bear;* and he indeed doth botly pursue it, saying, *Are not such thoughts in thee? Do not such motions work in thee? Canst thou deny thy heart to be as it is? Now the godly soul answereth, I cannot deny but such soul stirrings of heart are within me: But I deny the consequence, that therefore I am all over carnal: I distinguish between that which is spiritual absolutely and compleatly, and that which is gradual, and in some measure only.* It is true, I find the workings of sinne, but I also find the workings of grace. Therefore avoid *Satan, though thou mayest bruisse my heel, yet in time, I shall break thy head.*

Why a man should so much study to discern betwixt the flesh and spirit within him.

1. Because otherwise he will be apt to passe a false sentence upon himself.

2. Hereby he may prevent the Devils end in troubling us.





## S E R M. LXIII.

*What is to be understood by Paul's being pressed above measure ; As likewise, how neither natural, nor moral strength can carry us through troubles in a gracious manner.*

2 C O R. I. 8.

*Above strength.*

**T**He next particular to be considered in this Description of *Paul's* trouble, is the Aggravation of it from the Quality, It was *above strength*, *ὑπὲρ δύναμιν*. *Chrysostome* observeth this differeth from the other. For a burden may be exceeding heavy, yet to some mighty man, it may not be above his strength. When *Samson*, *Judg.* 16. 3. carried away the gates of the City *Gaza*, with the posts and barre upon his shoulders : here was a burden out of measure heavy, no ordinary man could do so ; but yet to *Samson* it was not above his strength. Thus it was with *Paul*, who may be called a *spiritual Samson*, for that heavenly might and power, which God had endowed him with ; he is assaulted with a trouble, that was not only hyperbolically weighty, but also above his strength. *Paul* had no more power to stand under it. The Greek word *δύναμις*, doth often signifie that inward power and ability, which a man hath to do any thing ; and some distinguish it from *ἐξουσία*, Right or Authority : The one they call *Potentia*, the other *Potestas* : The one is *Natural*, the other is *Moral*. Many a man hath a power to do a thing, when yet he hath no right or authority to do it. But in the Scripture we may observe these words promiscuously used for one another ; yea sometimes they are put together, as signifying the same thing, *Luke* 4. 36. *1 Cor.* 15. 24. In the Scripture we find this word often used for that power to work miracles ; yea and miracles themselves are called *δυνάμεις*, *Act.* 2. 22. *Rom.* 15. 19. Sometimes the word is applied to *Angels*, because of their great strength and power, *1 Pet.* 3. 22. In *Heb.* 6. 5. we have an expression of the powers of the world to come, which some are said, to have tasted of ; but what that is, is greatly controverted.

As to our purpose, we may take notice from the Scripture of a two-fold power :

1. The power of God, which is put forth in us by his grace, which we receive and partake of ; and so in that sense may be called our power, *viz.* objectively ; yea and in some sense subjectively, though not efficiently, *Ephes.* 3. 20. According to his power which worketh in us. Again saith *Paul*, I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me, *Phil.* 4. 13.

2. There is our own humane and natural strength, what we can do by our selves



selves only. Now the Question is, Whether *Paul* mean that this affliction was above even his *divine strength*, or that measure of grace and power which God had given him. So that if the Lord had not come in with extraordinary supply, and more than wonted grace, this trouble had overcome him? Or whether he mean only of his *natural strength and power*? So that his meaning should be, as a man he could not bear it, though as a Christian he did. It is very probable, that both these are included. So that neither the *natural strength* *Paul* had, nor that *divine strength* which usually he enjoyed, could have carried him through that difficulty.

Now to this expression which *Paul* useth in the Text, we have another place in *Paul*, which seemeth directly, and in expresse words to contradict this; it is 1 Cor. 10. 13. *There bath no temptation taken you, but what is common to man; but God is faithfull, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able, &c.* There *Paul* saith, God will not let his people be tempted above what they are able. And here *Paul* speaketh the contrary, He is troubled above what he is able: How can this be reconciled? Some untie this knot from the difference between *temptation* and *affliction*; There is no *temptation* (say they) befalleth the godly above what they are able; but there may some trouble and affliction. For it is a temptation, when it doth induce us into sinne, and maketh us to offend God. Therefore we pray, *God would not lead us into temptation*; but it may be an *affliction*, even when it is so farre from being a *temptation*, that we do thereby more exercise and put forth our graces. Thus (say they) it was with *Paul*, It was an *affliction* above his strength, but not a *temptation* above his strength. For at that time *Paul* kept up his graces, his faith and patience were made more illustrious, as fire getteth off rust. I cannot say this is solid enough.

For the Text therefore, though Expositors go several wayes, yet I shall pitch on this as most probable.

The former part of the verse, is a reason of that good exhortation, and necessary to every one, which he had given before, *Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall: Why? Because there bath no temptation as yet taken hold of you, but such as all men are capable of.* An humane temptation, that is, little, short and attemperated to mans strength, or what is usual amongst men; *As the rod of a man: And Isa. 8. 1. The pen of a man. Rom. 6. 19. I speak after the manner of men, ye have not yet been afflicted for Christianity.* Nero hath not yet commanded the Christians to be vexed and tormented for the faith you professe: Like that expression, *Heb. 12. 4. Ye have not yet resisted to blood.* So that they had just cause to walk humbly, and to be afraid of falling, because God had not put them yet upon any hard tryals for Christs sake. What they hitherto suffered was such as other men, though not Christians, did endure as well as they. But lest this should deject too much, as if the time were coming, when their persecutions should make them *Apostates*, he giveth them this wine to comfort their hearts with. This gracious promise which every Christian should call his promise, a continual *Antidore*, a daily *Cordial*, *God is faithfull, &c.* where every thing ingredient to it, is of admirable comfort, *God is faithfull.* It belongs to the faithfulness of God to preserve you, he hath taken you for his, and therefore his dishonour would be more than thy losse, if thou shouldst perish. No husbandman will lay a greater burden upon his beast, than he can bear: Shall man be pitifull to beasts, and not God a gracious Father to his children? The Artificer or Refiner likewise, he will not suffer his gold to lie longer in the fire, than the dross will be purged away; and shall not God so faithfull regard his children under their burdens? Again, *He will not suffer you to be tempted.* No Devil, no wicked man in the world can



go further than God suffereth: *Further, Not above that ye are able*] He knoweth your strength, he knoweth what will hurt you; he knoweth the time when he must take off the affliction: Therefore the issue will be comfortable, *He will give to escape, &c.* Some make it a Metaphor from the souldier, who escapes out of the warre with victory and conquest. Others from one, who is shut in, in some place, so that he is compassed about, but at last finds a way to get out: Yea the issue is not only to escape, but God will so plentifully come in upon us as that we shall *ἐκτρέψωμεν*, more than suffer, more than bear. As a strong man that is not only able to carry his burden to such a place he is commanded, but further also, if need require. Thus the godly have no more laid upon them than they can bear, by this promise; yea they can *more than bear it*, how then was *Paul's* above his strength? The Answer is, That this promise is to be understood of the *final issue* of any affliction, though for the present they may seem even to sink under it: They cry out, they cannot hold, they cannot bear any longer, yet God doth secretly support, and at last will give them strength, not only to bear, but *more than bear*, even to glory and rejoyce in it. And thus it was with *Paul*; this trouble, though so exceedingly pressing, though for the present above his strength; yet see how much strength he feeleth at the latter end. This trouble did not overcome him, but he overcame by the trouble by the grace of God. For by this he was brought not to trust in himself, but in God, who did deliver him; and thereupon he concludeth, he doth and will deliver him. So that God never suffereth any trouble, though it be for the present never so heavy and burdensom, totally and finally to overcome a man, but at last he proveth even more than a conquerour. These things thus explained, Observe,

It is not the natural strength of any man that can carry him through all afflictions.

*That it's not the natural strength of any man, no not of Paul, that is able to carry a man through such afflictions, that God may exercise him with.*

*Paul* saith here, *It was above his strength*; not to complain, not to accuse God, as if he were too severe; but thereby to debase himself, and to give all glory to God. Thus *Isai. 40. 28, 29.* when the Church began even to despair under her long calamities, saying, *Her way was hid from God, he took no notice of her condition.* With what encouragement doth God speak, and that from this property in him? *The Creator of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary.* God sinketh not under the government of the world, nor the preservation of the Church. For if the Sunne that hath runne its course so many years, is not weary, but can perform it as swiftly as ever: Do we think God will be weary? But this is not all the comfort. As he hath this power, so he communicateth it to his weak people. To them that have no might, he increaseth strength. So that the more sensible we are of our own impotency, the more ready is God to put forth his power.

To explain this, Let us consider,

First, That the sense of the Doctrine is, *That no man can bear any burden of affliction in a gracious manner without divine assistance from Christ.* Men may be naturally patient under great troubles; yea they may have that fortitude, as to be able to despise death it self; but all this is not done in a godly way. There is not the least temptation or affliction that cometh upon thee, but if God should leave thee to thy self, thou wouldst be broken under it; nothing but sinne and corruption would manifest it self therein. *Peters* case is abundantly known, a temptation did befall him, that was more than he could bear for the present, though he had a good issue out of it. Now this was a very little one in it self; *Peter* had not yet resisted to blood; It was but a Damsel,

1. No man can bear all afflictions aright in his own strength.



fel, and some others that told him he was of Christs company. Here was no arraignment of him, no impleading of him : Here is no sentence of death pronounced against him, and yet for all that he falls under it, and in a most dreadful manner denieth Christ. What will any one say here, *Peter was pressed above measure*? No : but from hence we may gather, That there is not the least, or most inconsiderable trouble that is, but falling upon thee in thy own strength, as *Sampson* with his hair cut off, but it is able to overwhelm thee. Therefore in all thy exercises, consider thy infirmity : Know that to bear the least burden as a Christian, thou canst not do it, unlesse it be given thee from above. For if ( *John 15.* ) *We are not able to do any good*, separated from Christ ; if we cannot performe any holy action without the help of grace, then much lesse are we able to bear any affliction graciously. Conclude then on this, That so great is thy sinfull infirmity and impotency, that thou canst no more in a godly manner bear thy burden, then the *lame Cripple* could rise up, and take his bed, and walke, till Christ bid him, and gave him power to do it.

Hence in the second place, *All those opinions, which hold, That a man is able to resist the tentations of sinne, whether by prosperity or adversity, so that they be not very extream and grievous, without grace and strength from Christ, are very injurious to the glory of God, though never so much coloured with specious distinctions.* A man cannot do the least good, or beare the least evil without Gods power, in an holy manner : And ( besides many Texts in Scripture ) the reason is plain, Because the power of man, and supernatural objects have no proportion or habitude between them. *Ordo Naturæ*, and *Ordo Gratiæ*, differ as much as Heaven and Earth. For this reason the people of God are so earnestly to pray to God, that *they be not lead into temptation.* For let what temptation soever arise, if God leaveth thee to thy self, it will be to thy ruine.

2. All opinions that hold the contrary, are injurious to the glory of God.

Therefore in the third place, Experience doth confirm it, *That many men through the natural strength they have, are able to beare up themselves under extream troubles.* Therefore we must acknowledge a vast difference between a *Natural bearing*, and a *Spiritual bearing of troubles* : And it is the duty for every one to examine, whether *Nature* or *Grace* doth support. *Rom. 4. 18.* it is there said of *Abraham*, *That against hope, he believed in hope* ; against *natural hope*, he believed in *divine and supernatural hope*. Thus the godly they do above strength with strength endure afflictions, above natural strength, with divine.

3. There is a great difference betwixt a natural and spiritual bearing of troubles

But because many men naturally have patient dispositions ; others stout and strong stomacks, it is good to know, whether *Nature* or *Grace* support thee. When *Solomon* saith, *Prov. 18. 14. The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear !* He doth by that give us a distinction of two sorts of troubles, The former *External*, such as fall upon our Body, Estate, or good Name. And now under these, many a man hath so much natural courage and boldnesse, that he will not shrink under them. But then

The second sort is *Internal*, because of the guilt of sinnes, when the wrath of God falleth upon the conscience being now awakened and made tender; this he calleth a *wounded spirit* ; and concerning this he saith, *None can bear it.* So that although for outward troubles, many men do with their natural power and strength go through them, yet a troubled conscience no humane power is able to bear, if God withdraw his helping hand. *Cain* cried out, *It was greater than he could bear.* *Judas* was so overwhelmed with it, that he destroyed his own self. Oh then take heed of bringing a burden upon thy conscience, that is heavier than any weight ! Poverty may be borne, misery



4. There is a difference likewise betwixt moral and spiritual bearing of afflictions.

misery and streights may be borne, but a wounded conscience, who can beare?

In the fourth place, There is not only a great difference between the natural spirit of a man to bear infirmities and a gracious, but also that *moral vertue* called *Fortitude* by Philosophers, which is so commended by them. They make *Fortitude* as a *vertue*, to lie in attempting difficult things, or bearing great evils for *vertues sake*. The *Romans* boast of many such virtuous persons amongst them, and for patient enduring of bitter torments, what expressions do the *Stoicks* delight in? They make all Philosophy to be in these two words *ἀνέχεσθαι* and *ἀμύχεσθαι*, *Sustine* and *abstine*. Now although by their rules they would teach a man to bear afflictions, yet this is but a splendid sinne. It's from Christ onely we can be strengthened to such things. And *Paul*, Phil. 4. 12. saith, *μεμύνηται*, *I am instructed as in a secret mystery, to know how to abound, and how to suffer need*. Wonder not then if you read of what fortitude and patience, even to admiration *Heathens* have excelled in, who yet were not strengthened by Christ: for vain-glory and corrupt aims may make men contemn their lives; yea, and the Devil many times filleth such with boldness and presumption; as we see in blasphemous Hereticks, who have shewed great confidence in their death. For as the Devil, when he possessed the bodies of some persons, filled them with more strength than naturally they had, so that they have been able to break iron chains in pieces; thus when he filleth the hearts of men by Gods just judgement with impudency and mad undaunted boldness, they will willingly adventure any danger whatsoever. The Devil hurrieth such into danger, yea death it self, as he did the swine into the sea.

*Use of Instruction*, to all that fear God, to humble themselves under every trouble God brings upon them; to go out of themselves, to acknowledge Gods strength onely. Say, O Lord, if I had no more power than my own, there is no cross I could bear; I am such a bruised reed, that I could not stand under any tribulation: Therefore I cast my burden upon thee; thou canst make me bear it, though of my self I cannot urge God: When thou feelest thy infirmities with that gracious promise, *Isai. 40. 30, 31*. All shall lose their strength, rather than the people of God. What? hath God given thee strength to love him, to believe in him, and hast thou no strength to suffer afflictions? *Be strong in the power of the Lord*, Ephes. 6. 10.





SERM. LXIV.

*The natural fear of Death is not taken away by Grace. What are the Uſes of it.*

2 COR. I. 8.

*Inſomuch that we deſpaired even of life.*

**T**His laſt claufe in the Text is a further Aggravation of the greatneſs of this trouble, which came upon him in *Aſia*, and it is from the *Event* or *Conſequent*; It was ſo great, that he could not eſcape death. The Greek word *ἐξαπορίσθαι*, hath an emphasis in the Prepoſition, and ſo is more than *ἀπορίσθαι*, for that doth properly ſignifie, *When a man is indeed doubting and full of debates within himſelf, not well concluding what to do.* Joh. 13. 22. Gal. 4. 20. but when this Prepoſition *ἐξ* is added it denoteth ſuch a perplexing that a man cannot any way evade out of it. Therefore the Apoſtle, you would think, ſpeaketh the contrary to this paſſage (as we ſhewed he did ſeemingly to the former.) For 2 Cor. 4. 8. there the Apoſtle doth expreſſly ſay, *ἀπορέμενοι, ἀλλὰ ἐν ἐξαπορέμενοι.* This word is uſed only there and in my Text. It may ſeem then a contradiction for the Apoſtle here to ſay, *He was without all help or means*, and there to ſay, *The godly never are.* But the answer is eaſie. For when in the Text *Paul* ſaith, *He was without all help or means*, he meaneth *natural and viſible*; There was no outward way to help him. Not but that God might deliver him in a way he did not ſee or apprehend; and ſo indeed God did deliver him, as appeareth afterwards. Therefore when in that fourth Chapter he ſaith, *The godly are never ſo deſtitute as to be without help*, he meaneth ſo as to have neither *divine or humane help*. Even as in the ſame place *Paul* ſaith of the godly *ἐν στενοχωρίαις*, *We are not diſtreſſed*; yet 2 Cor. 6. 4. he ſaith, *He was in neceſſities, in diſtreſſe, στενοχωρίας*, ſo 2 Cor. 12. 10.

The word thus explained, the ſumme of his meaning is, That this trouble was ſo great, that it brought him into ſuch a ſtraight, that in reſpect of any humane help, there was a neceſſity of his death, and this fear of death did much afflict and aſſault the ſpirit of *Paul*. Some render the word *taderet*, ſo that *Paul* was even weary of his life, as if he deſired to die, his trouble was ſo great. Some with our Translators, *We deſpaired of life.* But *Beza* doth willingly abſtain from that word; therefore that which doth moſt expreſs the ſignificancy of the word, is ſuch a perplexity and doubting in his mind about his life, that he could not ſee any wayes to eſcape; he was like *Jonah* in the Whales belly, out of which there was no viſible way to be delivered. So that the word implieth theſe two things:

1. That *Paul* was very anxious about his life, and was afraid of death.
2. That fleſh and blood did conclude there was no help for him, becauſe outwardly there did not appear any. From whence we may obſerve this Doctrine,



No grace removeth the natural fear of death.

*That Grace, though it be never so lively and active, yet doth not remove the natural fear of death.*

Grace doth not destroy nature. This holy Apostle, who is so confident of the love of God, and can triumph in all distresses, is yet afraid of death, is yet very solicitous about the preserving of his life. There is a *natural fear of death*, because there is implanted in a man a desire of self-preservation, so that to be without it would be a sinne. And then there is a *sinfull fear of death*, which ariseth from sinne, or tendeth to sinne. Now the grace of God doth at least in some measure conquer the latter, but it cannot overcome the former. Hence *Jacob* for fear of death, we see him in a great straight upon his meeting with his brother *Esau*, greatly praying to God to turn the heart of his brother, and also studying to mollifie his spirit, with presents he sent to him. *David* likewise was very solicitous in the preservation of his life, when *Saul* did so bitterly pursue him. Yea *Hezekiah*, though he had the testimony of a good conscience, and could appeal even to God, *That he had served him with an upright heart, and in truth*, yet when the Prophet *Isaiah* declared to him, that he must die, it is said, *He wept sore*, Isa. 28. 2, 3. and at the ninth verse, we have a description of the bitterness of his soul under those fears. Yea the Lord Christ himself, *In whom was found no sinne*, yet we find him greatly affected with the fear of death. And although he had a peculiar reason, because he *tasted of death for our sake*, and so did therein bare our sinnes, conflicting with the wrath of God due to us, yet there was included in this a *natural fear of death*. They that make *Christ's* fear of death only *natural*, and say, therefore he was more sadly affected with it, than any of the Prophets or Martyrs, because of the exquisite and tender constitution of his body, do greatly derogate from that work of mediation for us, and satisfaction, which was done by his blood to the justice of God.

From these examples you see, that though grace can subdue sinne, conquer lusts, overcome the Devil, yet it cannot totally take away the anxiety and fear of death, which is altogether natural, though the sinfulness of it may be mortified. But to this it may be objected, How could *Paul* be so solicitous about death, when *Phil. 1. 23.* he saith, *He had a desire to depart, and to be with Christ*? Yea he did not know what to choose, whether life or death, *He was in a straight betwixt two, a desire to be with Christ, and a desire to live*, that he might be serviceable to the Church? That this may be answered, it is good to take more exact notice of that place; for it is an admirable demonstration of the gracious frame of *Paul's* heart: lest the *Philippians* should think that he desired their prayers for himself now in bonds for the Gospel, as being too inordinately affected to the desire of life, he sheweth what a blessed frame of heart he had obtained unto; even that if it were put to his choice, whether he should live or die. he should be straightned what to do; The desire to be with Christ on one side, did so affect him, and the desire of the Churches good by his labours on the other side did so much work upon him: where we may observe, that his desire to depart was not because he had troubles and calamities here, it was not because of the miseries and afflictions he met with, but want of love to Christ, *That I may be with Christ*, saith he; he doth not say, that I may have glory, that I may reign in Heaven, but *be with Christ*. *Christ's* presence maketh Heaven to be Heaven. Though *Paul* in this life was in Christ, yet he was not with Christ. Further, he doth not say meerly, *I desire*, but *ἔχω ἐμπύριον*, *Having a desire*; it was a constant, settled, permanent desire in him, and that *ἀναλωσέω*, to cut the rope (as it were) and to set sail to Heaven, to return to him from whom he had his spiritual being. The Apostle then



then did not only desire to be *with Christ*, but he judged it the *farre better condition* for him.

Therefore we must distinguish of a two-fold desire; there is a *Natural Desire*, and an *Elicite Desire*. A *Natural Desire* is that which floweth from the meer principles of Nature, desiring to preserve it self; and this *Paul* could not but have as he was a man. Even as our Saviour told *Peter*, *He should be bound, and should be carried whether he would not*, Joh. 21. 18. that is, according to his natural will, otherwise according to his will as sanctified, did with readines and joy go to the place of his Martyrdom. An *Elicite Desire* is that which a man putteth forth according to the principles of reason and grace, so that we may desire one thing with a *natural desire*, another thing with an *elicit*. A man that hath a putrified arm, doth with a *natural desire* will to continue his arm still in his body, but with an *elicit desire* following reason, so he willet to cut it off: And thus *Paul* did with an *elicit desire*, so he willed Heaven and being with Christ, rather than to continue in the flesh.

To amplify this, Consider,

First, *That death is not according to mans creation at first, he was not made mortal or corruptible*: But as the sentence of God doth witness, In the day *Adam* did eat of the forbidden fruit, he fell into a dying condition. It is true, The Question is of a large dispute, Whether *Adam* was made immortal or no? The *Papists* say, he was made mortal; and the *Socinians* they do more frowardly oppose this truth, affirming, *Adam* would have died, though there had not been any eating of the forbidden fruit. So that with them actual death was necessary before *Adams* sinne; only it became a punishment after. But *Rom. 5.* the Apostle at large sheweth, *That by one mans sinne death came into the world.* And *Rom. 6. 23.* *The wages of sinne is death.* Death then being wholly against the natural institution: At first *Adam* had an implanted love of his life in him. And although his estate was so blessed, that there could not be place for any fear, yet had he been capable of losing his life, his love to it would have made him afraid of being deprived of it. This then is the great mystery, that the natural wise men of the world were ignorant of. Death they would not deny, they called it, *The tribute of Nature, which all must pay*; only they did not know the cause of it, they understood not how it came to seise upon all mankind.

Secondly, Seeing that death is thus connatural, and the effect of sinne and the Devil, Hence it is that which maketh Death farre more terrible than otherwise it would be, is sinne. Whatsoever bitterness and gall is in death, it doth chiefly come from sinne, *1 Cor. 15. 56.* *The sting of death is sinne.* So many finnes as thou committest, thou puttest so many stings into death to make it more dreadfull. Could a man die, and have not any sinne laid to his charge, though it would be pain, yet it would not be terrour. When *Aristotle* calleth death *ποσειν κατεργαστων*, *The terrible of terribles.* He speaketh of death as now it is. Now in death, as ordinarily men die, there is not a bare apprehension of the dissolution of soul and body, but there is the guilt of sinne likewise interposing, whereby a dying man is usually terrified with the thoughts of what he hath done; and in Christians, what will become of them when they are dead. *Animula blandula, quæ nunc abibis in loca.* Die I dare not, live I cannot; and thus his soul is miserably in agonies, and grievous tormenting fears, and all because sinne is the sting of death. Oh it were easie to die were it not for sinne, for hell, for judgement, were it not for conscience accusing and condemning! But this is it which maketh the thoughts of it so grievous and terrible.

Therefore in the third place, *The Lord Christ came into the world to destroy and remove this sting of death.* To change the nature of death that it should

The difference betwixt a natural and an elicit desire.

Propositions clearing the truth..

1. Man was not made mortal.

2. Tis sin that maketh death so terrible.

3. Christ came into the world to remove this sting of death, sinne.



should not be matter of terror, but of joy and comfort, being like *Joseph's* Chariot to carry us to the place of our hope and desire. Thus we have the Apostle insulting over death, 1 Cor. 15. 54, 55. *Death is swallowed up in victory.* Death doth not swallow the godly man, but he doth swallow that up: *O death, where is thy sting?* Thanks be to God which giveth us victory by our Lord *Iesus Christ*. Were it not then for Christ, what would become of a poor humbled sinner? What terrour would compass him about? This powerfull effect of Christs death (for death overcometh death) is notably spoken of, *Heb. 2. 14.* *That through death he might deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage.* A learned man *Cocceius* understands this of the *Jewes* especially, who because of those many Ceremonial Lawes, they were in bondage to, were in continual fear of death, because the transgressing of many of those Lawes God made capital, they were to die for it: hence they could not be, but in constant fear of death. But it seemeth more genuine to interpret more largely, as an effect of Christs death to believing *Gentiles*, as well as to the *Jewes*. It is from Christ only that the terrible thoughts of death can be mitigated, otherwise to a man not in Christ it is the beginning of hell.

4. Yet howsoever nature cannot but tremble at the thoughts of it.

But in the fourth place, *Though to the godly thus death is changed in its Nature.* The *Serpent* hath its sting taken out; *Moses* need not runne from it, it is only turned into a rod of a fatherly chastisement, yet *Nature* cannot but tremble at the approaches of it. The heart of that man, who is most heavenly, though he would gladly be in *Canaan*, yet he is not willing to passe through this wilderness to it; he would be cloathed with immortality, but is unwilling to put off this garment of the body. We would be happy, but we would not die. As children cry for a new garment to have it on, and yet cry while it is putting on: so greatly is the love of life, and the fear of death engraffed in the very heart of a man. And so farre as this fear of death is only natural, not immoderate, it is of great use. For

Of what use the natural fear of death is.

1. Hence men do more patiently endure afflictions.

First, *Hereby men do more patiently abide under their afflictions.* As long as it is not death, they do the more willingly bear it. *Lament. 3. 39.* *Wherefore doth a living man complain?* If a man be greatly punished for his sinnes, yet if God keep him alive, he hath cause to be more patient. Thus Satan thought (*Job 2. 4.*) *Skinne for skinne, and all that a man hath he will give for life.* Therefore he would have *Job* tryed in that. Fear then of death is a mercy, because hereby men may the more readily sit down under other afflictions that are not so bad as death. When therefore men come to such high discontents as *Ahitophel*, because his counsel was neglected: or such despairing terrours of conscience as *Judas* did, that they choose to die, yea to make away themselves. This as it is an heavy temptation and desertion from God, so it argueth that by the fear of death, men do patiently abide under their distresses; but when they care not for this, they voluntarily throw themselves into the flame of hell.

2. It keeps men out of many sins.

Secondly, The natural fear of death is of great use in this respect, *That it doth keep men from the committing of many sinnes, which otherwise they would securely offend in.* Hence God appointed in the Law, the punishment of death for many sinnes. And *Rom. 13.* the Apostle biddeth him that doth evil, be afraid of the powers, *Because they bear not the sword in vain.* It is therefore the fear of death that maketh men keep within bounds of righteousness and honesty. It is not the fear of God, nor the fear of hell, nor the fear of sinne it self, but a bodily corporal death that restraineth men from sinne. So that if men come to that height of obstinacy, as not to fear death, they are prepared for any impiety, *Vitam qui contempsit suam tunc Dominus est.* When the Devil would perswade *Eve* to sinne, he telleth her,



her, *She shall not die*; he giveth her hopes of life.

Thirdly, The natural fear of death is thus farre advantageous, *That it maketh a man more thankfull for the mercies of his life, for his food and raiment, which go to the preservation of his life.* Therefore a godly man doth make advantage of this fear of death, to stirre up himself to all thankfulness, to look up unto God, as knowing, *That in him onely we live, move, and have our being.* It is also from this fear of death, that the godly are more quickned to improve the day of grace; to be working while it is called to day. Those that had made a *Covenant with death*, they grew desperate, *Let us eat and drinke, for to morrow we shall die*, whereas rather to have concluded, *Let us pray, mourn and repent, lest to morrow we die.* If therefore the godly are at any time greatly dejected with the fear of death, the thoughts of it are a great temptation, they sadly complain, that they cannot conquer those slavish thoughts; the memory of death is bitter to them, they cannot take any joy, when they think of it: Let them, among other things remember, to turne this water into wine by faith: Let them make an advantage of this natural infirmity. Dost thou fear to die? Then be more thankfull to God for the dayes and years he hath given thee in this world. Dost thou fear to die? Oh then be fruitfull, live holily, make a good use of thy health, that so when death shall come, it may be only death thou shalt grapple with, not death and sin also, death and the anger of God with it. Death enough is terrible, do not thou make it fuller of horreur.

3. It makes a man more thankfull for the mercies of life.

Fifthly, *This natural fear of death is very difficultly kept from being a sinfull fear.* It is very hard to regulate and order it aright, so that in some respect or other it doth not go beyond its bounds. It's hard so to fear, and not to over-fear. Even the most godly have found this fear of death to be a great snare to them; They have not done the good they should have done, because of this fear: They have gone against conscience, wounded their spirits, because of fear. *Abraham*, though he was the *Father of the faithfull*, yet did use sinfull equivocation with *Abimelech* about *Sarah*, from which many sad evils might have been committed, and all was this sinfull fear of death. Though a godly man be allowed to have a *natural fear of death*, yet he must take heed of a *sinfull fear*. This hath brought many into such grievous sinnes, that the fear of their consciences about Gods anger, about hell and damnation, have quite swallowed up the fears of death, at last the greater fear hath devoured the lesse. To whom are woes and wounds of conscience by apostasie and forsaking of Christ, but to those who have too excessively been afraid of death? As we see in *Peter*, and many others. Our next work therefore is to shew, when the natural fear of death goeth beyond its bounds, and becometh sinfull.

4. The natural fear of death is very hardly kept from being sinfull.





## SERM, LXV.

*Of the natural and sinfull fear of Death : How to discern between them ; and from whence the sinfulness of that fear proceedeth.*

2 COR. 1. 8.

*So that we despaired even of life.*

**T**His last aggravating particular in the description of *Paul's* trouble in *Asia*, hath been explained, and in some measure enlarged. The summe whereof was, *That grace even in a Paul, doth not wholly remove the natural fear of death.* Grace doth regulate and direct Nature, but not extinguish it. *Stoicism* and *Christianity* differ as much as *Heaven* and *Earth*. Not to fear, not to grieve about due objects in a due manner, is a sinne, not a vertue. But though grace doth not extirpate this natural fear of death, yet it subdueth and conquereth the sinfull fear of death. Our natural fear doth quickly become immoderate, and so offensive unto God. Therefore the proper work of grace is to mortifie this, that it may not be over-fearing, that this fear may not prove a temptation to sinne.

There is a natural fear of death in all, but in some more, in some lesse.

Our work therefore in the next place, is to direct a Christian in the discerning between a *Natural* fear, and a *Sinfull* fear, that he may know what is of meeke nature, and what is of corrupt nature. Only it is good to take notice of this;

1. *That a natural fear of death may be in some more, and in some lesse, from the very constitution and temperament of their body.* Some are very fearfull by their very natural complexion, and to such death is more dreadfull than to others, who are of a more bold and stout constitution: Even as some are more prone to anger than others; so some are more prone to fear than others; and this being a natural passion, they cannot conquer it, no more than grace can change the temperament of the body. Onely to the godly, such a natural fear is sanctified: They go out of themselves, they depend much upon God. And therefore some who have been assaulted exceedingly with fears in the times of persecution, suspecting their own selves, that they should prove perfidious to Christ, and Apostates, have found unexpected courage and boldness, because they have gone out of themselves, and trusted in God only. These Lambs have proved Lions. Hence the Scripture, antidotes and comfortable promises against this fear, *Isa. 53. 4. Say to them that are of a fearfull heart, Be strong, feare not.* Yea we have a precious promise to the godly, that under Christs government and protection over them, *Ier. 23. 4. They shall fear no more, nor be dismayed.* If then the godly find himself of a fearfull disposition, that it is a natural passion tyrannizing over him, let him pray for the sanctification of it, that God would turn it to his good; and many times such are preserved from those wounds of conscience, and those sad falls, which those that are more presumptuous and self-confident do fall into. As there is thus a natural passion of fear about death in some more than in others, so also sometimes (by Gods permission)



mission) the children of God have been assaulted by it as a peculiar temptation; and that improved by Satan. So that whereas there are several kindes of temptations, whereby the Devil doth molest and disquiet the godly, sometimes by blasphemous thoughts, sometimes by fear of committing that unpardonable sinne against the holy Ghost, &c. So sometimes it is by a daily and constant fear of death, such a perswasion of death doth fall upon them, and that accompanied with much distracting fear and trembling, that it takes away the comfortable enjoyment of all those mercies God bestoweth upon them. This hath been the case of many of the children of God, and the Devils designe is by these unprofitable and needlesse feares, to keep them from that service, which otherwise they might do for God. For as Timber too moist, and not well dried, will deceive the builder, and not support the house, as it is expected: so neither can a Christian, amazed with such dividing fears, do God that service in his place, as he ought to do. These are like wormes in the wood, that at last eat up the heart of it. Such therefore that are buffeted with these temptations, they have no other wayes to take, but to flie unto God: He is the *Jehovah*, who can give power and strength to them, as was done to *Daniel*, in his great amazement, and unto the Scripture, as a directive Rule, from whence he may wisely observe many remedies against such preposterous feares. Let him also possesse his soul with this as an undoubted principle, That the Lord bindeth him in this chain (as it were) to prevent other sinnes that he may boldly venture upon; and that these feares continually annoying, are a meanes to keepe off some great sinnes or others. They are like barking curres, that keepe off thieves, when they heare such a noise within.

These things premised, Let us now consider, *When, and wherein the fear of death doth manifest itself to be sinfull.* And

First, *When it becometh a snare to a man, so that by it, he either commits some sinne, or omits some duty.* When the fear of death hath this influence upon thee, then know it exceedeth its limits. Thou fearest men more than God, thou fearest death more than hell and damnation; *Prou. 29. 25. The fear of a man bringeth a snare.* When it bringeth a snare upon thee, conscience saith, Doe not this; the Word of God saith, Doe not this; but fear of death saith, Doe this, then this becometh very sad in the issue; as you see it was in *Peter*, fear made him deny his Master. So in *Abraham*, and *Isaac*, though so great examples of holinesse, yet fear of death put them upon lying and dissimulation. Now to sinne for fear of death, is a most absurd and irrational fear; to fear the lesse, and not to fear the greater. Thou dost not fear to be damned, yet thou fearest to die. How fully doth our Saviour convince us of the folly of this fear? *Luk. 12. 4, 5. I say to you my friends.* Though the Disciples had this comfortable title and encouraging relation upon them (what could be greater than to be Christs friend? Will Christ forsake his friend in adversity? Shall any have cause to say to Christ, as *Absalom* to *Hushai*, *Is this thy kindness to thy friend?*) Yet how ready are they to fear men and death immoderately? Therefore he exhorteth them, *Not to be afraid of men, who can kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but I will forewarn you whom you shall fear.* They need premonitions about it; the object whereof is, *God who hath power to cast into hell, which he redoubleth, yea I say to you, fear him.* So that by this place we see, that it is a most and unreasonable fear, to venture the damnation of our souls for fear of death: Yet how often hath this been done? but sometimes it hath proved so dismall, as in *Spiras*, and others, that the guilt of sinne, and the terrors of Gods wrath falling upon their conscience, have so greatly overwhelmed them, that the fear of death hath been quite put out by a greater fear. They have desired death, yea they have hastened to it, by offering

When the fear of death is sinfull.  
1 When it becomes a snare.



violence to themselves. As the fear of death is thus sinfull when it putteth thee upon sinne: so when it maketh thee omit any duty that God requireth; thou darest not confesse God and his truth in the midst of a perverse generation; thou darest not be valiant for the truth, nor plead for righteousness, this fear is excessive. Love to God, love to his glory should cast out the fear of death. Observe then thy self in dangers or temptations, how thou findest thy fear to put thee upon sinfull compliances or omissions, and presently, as *Jehoshaphat* in the midst of a battel being in great danger, cried out unto God for help, so do thou to be delivered from this sinfull fear, that is a deadly enemy encompassing thee about.

2. When it is immoderate and disquieting.

Secondly, *Thy fear about death is sinfull, when it is immoderate and disquieting of thee, so that thou dost not walk with a cheerefull quiet and calm spirit.* So that although it may not put thee upon any sinfull or unlawfull enterprize, yet if it fill thee with anxieties, with trepidations, so that it depriveth thee of that Evangelical joy and peace; in this excess it is a sinne. All that are truly godly, *Being justified by faith they are to have peace* in their hearts; yea they are to *rejoyce alwayes in the Lord*; but the inordinate fear of death causeth this sunne to be in an eclipse: and as men subject to swooning fits, or convulsions, cannot go with that courage and confidence up and down, as those who are freed from such distempers; Thus also the slavish and immoderate fear of death putteth millstones about our neck, is a continual *Ephialtes* upon the soul, filleth the spirit with heaviness, whereby that Evangelical life and Gospel-conversation that we are called unto, is seldome or never exercised. Observe then thy self, doth such fears of death make thy soul full of tumults and distractions? Doth it oppose any Evangelical grace, or retard the Spirit of Adoption upon thy soul? Then humble thy self, know thou sinnest against God, and pray for the mortification of it; and this thou art to do, though it doth not make thee put out thy hand to any evil way; though it doth not make thee omit any known duty. For as worldly and distrustfull cares, though lodging only in the heart, are greatly displeasing to God, though we do not thereby fall into coverous and unjust wayes, yet the very cares and distractions of the heart are forbidden, as appeareth by that reproof given to *Martha*, by our Saviour himself, *Luke 10.41. Martha, Martha, thou art troubled about many things, but one thing is needfull.* Thus it is also in fears, though thou art not instigated thereby to unlawfull wayes to preserve thy self, yet the distractions and divisions of thy heart are offensive to God. Therefore as the Apostle saith, *Phil. 4.6. Be carefull in nothing, but let your requests be made known to God.* Let prayer rebuke all storms and tempests of sinfull cares, so in nothing be fearfull, no not about death it self, but commit thy self by prayer to God, to whom the issues of life and death do belong.

3. When it excludeth much profitable and seasonable fear

Thirdly, *This fear of death is sinfull, when it excludeth better and more profitable, and seasonable fear.* The Scripture doth frequently command a fear of God, and the serving of him with godly trembling, *Psal. 2. 11.* Yea the whole work of grace is exprest in this, *That God will put his fear in our hearts, Jer. 32.40.* If then this fear of God did more prevail and rule in our hearts, we should not fear diseases and death so much as we do: The fear of God would put a due moderation upon all the powers of the soul: This would regulate the fear of all other things, so that we dare not fear otherwayes than God hath commanded, then this natural fear is compatible with gracious fear. For as our love to the creatures must be animated and regulated by our love to God, so that we are never to love any thing, that thereby our love to God may be abated or diminished: Thus it must be in fear, we are never to dread any thing further than it is consistent with the fear of God; therefore it may fall out sometimes, that the fear of God may justly put us upon



upon the fear of death, as when we walk negligently, coldly and formally; when we do not make up our daily accounts with God; when we do not make our daily peace with God, with renewed repentance and faith. If we live in this manner, then we have good cause to fear death, because we are unprovided for it, it seizeth on us before we are prepared; and the fear of God may justly put us into this fear of death. For we know how great, holy and just God is, how dreadfull his appearance will be at the day of judgement; and all that we can do, it must be done before death; then *the night is come, and none can work*. To repent, to bewail our unprofitableness, our neglect of the seasons of grace in hell, will then be as unprofitable, as *Esaú's* teares when he had lost his birth-right. There is therefore a just and holy fear about death, lest it should take us not doing the work of God; lest it should come so unexpectedly, that we be forced to cry out with him, *Inducias usque ad mane! O spare me till to morrow!* Let one live another day to make peace with God, and the fear of God will put us upon this fear, as the Apostle said, 2 Cor. 5. 11. *Knowing the terrour of the Lord, we perswade men.* Thus it is here, *Knowing the terrour of the Lord*, that he is greater than our hearts, that if they condemn us, then God will much more; This will put a fear of death upon us, because that is nothing but the presenting of our souls in his presence. We read *Judg. 6. 23.* and in many other places, when God made any glorious apparition, the persons who beheld it were so amazed and stricken with the sense of their imbecillty, that they thought they should die presently; and shall not the thoughts about death, that it's the dislodging of the soul and bringing it immediately before God, strike much terrour into us? This holy and reverential fear about death is laudable, and is the fruit of the fear of God; but when this fear of death maketh thee fear God the less, or hindereth thee in the service of him, then cast this *Hagar* out of doors.

Fourthly, *The fear of death is sinfull, when it doth proceed from a sinfull cause.* If the fountain be bitter, then the stream is bitter. Now there are these sinfull causes of the fear of death.

1. When it proceedeth from an inordinate love of life. An excessive love of life doth alwayes beget an immoderate fear of death. So that we may judge of the sinfulness of fear by the sinfulness of love: If thy heart be not mortified and crucified to the world, if thy heart be not loosned and weaned from earthly comforts; and this maketh thee afraid to die, this is sinfull. It is a fundamental qualification required in every Disciple of Christ; he cannot be Christs, unless he be above the love of all things, *Matth. 10. 37. He that loveth father, or mother, or life it self, more than me, cannot be my Disciple.* Why then art thou so afraid to die? Is it because thy heart is so dearly engaged in such relations, to such creatures? Be humbled for this, and reform.

A second sinfull cause which floweth from the former, is, *The want of love to God, and to Christ.* Thy desire is not with *Paul*, *To be with Christ*; thou doest not judge this best of all. Not to be willing to die upon this account, must also be very sinfull. Do we not pray for the *Kingdome of God*? Are we not to look for, and hasten the coming of Christ? Are we not to be as pilgrims and strangers in this world? Now if these things were real upon thee, though thou couldst not avoid a natural fear, yet thou wouldst greatly subdue a sinfull fear.

3. There is a sinfull cause of the fear of death, *When we produce those actions, and live such a life, which will justly make death terrible.* Thou complaineest, I am afraid to die, I dare not think of death, and why? Thou doest put stings into death, thou increasest the guilt of thy conscience, by living without repentance and reformation; and then it is no wonder if such a sinfull cause make a sinfull effect. Sinneless, keep thy conscience clear, and then thou wilt fear death less.

4. When it proceeds from a sinfull cause, as from 1. An inordinate love of life.

2. The want of love to God.

3. A sinfull life.



4. Want of faith in Christ.

The last sinfull cause of the sinfull fear of death, is, *Want of faith in Christ*, and this even the godly are subject to, though they live holily and unblameably, though they have kept a good conscience towards God and men, yet they have sometimes uncomfortable fears about death, because they do not look upon Christ, they consider not that Christ hath conquered death. So that now every Christian may with *Paul* triumph, *Death is swallowed up in victory, O death, where is thy sting?* 1 Cor. 15. 54, 55. but want of faith depriveth of this holy comfort and boldness. See then if thy want of faith maketh thee fear death; and consider that if so, this is very injurious to Christ, as if still death were not subdued, as if death had conquered Christ, and not Christ death. Faith will make thee see a loveliness and another nature in death, than what it had at first.



## S E R M. LXVI.

*The truly godly may sometimes passe false sentences upon their own Persons and Actions, and Gods dispensations towards them.*

2 COR. 1. 9.

*But we had the sentence of death in our selves, that we should not trust in our selves, but in God which raiseth the dead.*

**T**He second Doctrine remaining from the clause of the former verse, viz. *That the children of God judge otherwise, while they attend to second causes and humane helps, then they do, while they look to the power and promise of God,* will come in very seasonably, as a branch of that general usefull matter, which this Text will afford us.

Come we therefore to the consideration of it.

1. It is a further amplification of this trouble which came upon him in *Asia*, and that is the most extream and highest aggravation that yet hath been used, which is expressed in the beginning, *We had the sentence of death in our selves.*

2. It is illustrated from the wholsome and saving end of this trouble laid on him, *It was not brought upon him by God for his destruction, but his spiritual good.* His soul might have been in danger, if his body had not been. He might have perished spiritually, if he had not been in danger of perishing temporally.

Now this blessed effect of his trouble is set down :

1. Negatively, *That we might not trust in our selves.*

2. Positively, *But in God.* Described by a suitable property, *Who raiseth the dead.*

Let us begin with the aggravation; his trouble was so great, *That he had received the sentence of death in himself.* This is more than the clause in the precedent verse, for there it was *ἐκπαίδευσις*, *He was in such a doubt and perplexity about his life, that he did not see any way to evade;* but here he is positive, he comes now to make resolute conclusions, *He must die, He had received the sentence of death.*



death. The Greek word is *ἀποκείμα*, used here in this place onely in the New Testament. The Verb from whence it cometh *ἀποκείνω* and *ἀποκείνομαι*, *Budeus* sheweth to have two more eminent significations; the one is, to separate and sever one thing from another; in which sense I do not observe it used in the New Testament. It useth *ἀνακρίνω* in that sense, even as humane Authours also do most frequently. 1 Cor. 1. 15. *The spiritual man judgeth all things*, by searching and judging he cometh to discern the truth from error. The other signification is to answer, in which sense it is alwayes used in the New Testament. *Favorinus* in his *Lexicon* maketh this difference between *ἀποκρίσις* and *ἀπολογία*. The former is a bare simple Answer made to any Question; the later is an Answer by way of defence against some accusation. The proper word for an Answer is *ἀποκρίσις*, as *Luke* 2. 47. *Luke* 20. 26. *Joh.* 1. 22. *ἀποκείμα* is seldome used for an Answer, yet *Stephen* sheweth out of *Suidas* an expression *ἐν ἀποκείμασι*, like that a *secretis*, one whose office was to answer requests. Hence some translate it answer, as it is in the margin. But the most genuine translation is sentence; for so *Hesychius* expounds the word *κατακρίμα*, *κρίμα*, whom *Favorinus* followeth verbatim in this, as in many other particulars. It is true *Heinsius* on the place maketh the word in a contrary sense, to signifie an answer or inspiration from God, secretly assuring of him that he should not die; like that *Act.* 24. 24. *Fear not Paul*, such answers were by the *Urim* and *Thummim*. So that in his sense it should imply Gods suretiship or undertaking for his preservation: But the other is more generally received, and the following words argue such a sense.

The word then doth signifie a sentence passing upon him, *That he must die*. This he had received; but from whom? Not from God, for God delivered him, nor from the Magistrate, there was no such Decree that we read of against him: Therefore it was onely from his own feares, his own thoughts, which maketh him say, *He had received it in himself*. You see then, that Gods thoughts were others then *Paul's*. *Paul* absolutely concluded he should die, but God had purposed the contrary. From whence observe,

*That the godly themselves are sometimes greatly deceived about Gods administrations to them.*

The godly are sometimes deceived about Gods dispensations towards them

They are apt to erre in their judgements about Gods dispensation. They gather such conclusions, and make such inferences as are wholly opposite to Gods intentions. Though it be said that the people of God do communicate with Christ in some measure, as with his priestly and Kingly Office, so with his Prophetical, as if they were able to know the mind of God in many things, yet we must take heed that such a principle doth not draw us into spiritual delusions. For nothing is more ordinary even to a godly man, then to take his strong affections and vehement conjectures for impulses and inspirations from God. *Paul* in this trouble did absolutely conclude, *He should die*; he had past this sentence upon himself, but God had determined otherwise.

I shall handle this truth more generally than the Text doth intend, yet including that also. And

First, *Herein the heart of a good man doth deceive him, in that he is ready to give such advise to others sometimes, which he may apprehend is of God, and yet it ariseth from humane perswasion only*. Those that are godly are constantly and judiciously to examine, what is humane, and what is divine in them; what cometh from God, and what from their own spirits. Sad and miserable have the deceits of many been in this case. No wonder it may be so with a godly man. For it hath sometimes fared thus with those, who besides the spirit of sanctification, have also been endowed with prophetical illumination. *Nathan*, 1 Chron. 17. 2. bid *David* do all that was in his heart, when he purposed to build

1. A godly man may sometimes be deceived in his advise to others, which he may think is of God, when it is not.



build an house to God ; but we see afterwards God did forbid it. It is true, there were in the Old Testament false prophets, who did wittingly and willingly sinne, pretending they had a word from God, when it was only a lying spirit in them ; but of such we speak not. Yea we read of a true Prophet of the Lord, yet pretending a word from God, when he did wilfully dissemble all that while, 1 King. 13. 18. For when a Prophet had command from God not to eat or drink in his journey ; This other Prophet perswadeth him to eat, saying, *An Angel of God spake to him for that purpose.* Here was a great temptation to the former Prophet to eat ; it could not but work some scruples in him. So that from this instance Divines do argue, That it is lawfull for a man to goe against scruples. But because the Prophet did not, but was perswaded against Gods former command, therefore he was severely punished. But this instance is not fully to my purpose ; onely from that example we may see, That the corruption in man inclineth him to make pretences from God to get the more credit. Even as in *Paul's* time, some pretended the Spirit and Revelations about the day of judgement. But the example of *Nathan* is wholly to our purpose ; and therefore all that fear God, are to pray for an exact judgement, to discern between things that differ, and that more in our selves than others. For such is our self-love that we are difficultly brought to know the truth : As a sensible object put immediately upon the sense, hindereth it in its operations. We see *Paul* very imitable in this thing, 1 Cor. 7. in answering that case about marriage, which the *Corinthians* had propounded to him. Hence vers. 10. & 12. how careful is he to distinguish between that which he had from the Lord directly, and was his expressed will, and what he advised as a faithfull Officer in the Church, *Not I, but the Lord*, saith he. Hence he concludeth his Discourse in a most humble and modest manner, calling it *his judgement*, onely adding, *I think also that I have the Spirit of God.* Though you must know, that in all this *Paul* was acted infallibly by the Spirit ; he speaketh not as an humane Authour in this thing.

2. They are deceived when they think Gods dispensations are to abet some errors which they may befallen into.

Secondly, *The godly are deceived, when they have some prepossessed principles of error in them, and then think Gods dispensations are to abet and countenance them.* This hath commonly caused great mistakes, whereby men have thought they had Gods approbation to their deceits. We see this plainly in the Disciples, this false principle they had imbibed, that the *Messiah* would come as a temporal and external King, to vindicate their Nation from all the bondage they were under. Therefore when Christ speaketh of his Kingdome, and his Glory, when he speaketh of being exalted, they apply all consonantly to their false principles. Upon this mistake the sons of *Zebedee* come to ask Christ for the chiefest places of honour in his Kingdom, and upon Christs Ascension in Heaven, Act. 1. 6. when he had for fourty dayes together been speaking of the Kingdom of God to them : Then they asked him, *Wilt thou at this time restore the Kingdome of Israel ?* Here you see how much even the Apostles, the first fruits (as it were) of the Spirit were decived ; But what was the *tempter* *Jeſus*, what was the deceitfull foundation in this building ? Even a carnal and an erroneous perswasion about the temporal dignity and honour of Christ. Take then much heed that the first concoction be not nought, that there be not *Lasum principium*, some principle received, that thou must not so much as question the truth of it ; and then according to this thou makest many false and erroneous conjectures about Gods proceedings to thee.

3. When they judge of God after outward appearance.

Thirdly, *Then the godly are very apt to be deceived about Gods wayes to themselves or others, when they judge of God after outward and humane appearance.* When they expect that God should do, as some high and mighty Monarch of the world would do. We see hom *Samuel*, a man so highly proficient in the fear of God, and all integrity, yet when he came to choose out the man God



God had designed for the Kingdom, how quickly he mistook, and was at a loss, 1 Sam. 16. 6, 7. For when Eliab came into his presence, he said, *Surely the Lords anointed is here.* But then observe how God did reprove his humane judgement, when he said to Samuel, *Look not upon his high stature, for the Lord seeth not as man seeth, adding also the ground of it, because man judgeth by outward appearance, but God judgeth the heart.* It is true, the godly have this promise, that many things shall be manifested to them, which to other the Lord will not reveal, Psal. 25. 14. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.* Hence we have that notable expression to Abraham by God, when he was purposed to destroy Sodome, Gen. 18. 17. *Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I will do?* and one reason is, *because he will command his children, and his household to keep the way of the Lord.* We have likewise a very comfortable expression which our Saviour useth to his Disciples, John 15. 15. *Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doth, but I have called you friends, for all things I have heard of my Father I have made known to you.* From this it is, that some eminently godly men have been endowed with a propheticall spirit, and have used much boldness in prayer to God, as that known expression of *Luthers, Fiat voluntas mea Domine.* In *Savonarola* likewise, even *Machiavil* did acknowledge a Divine Spirit in him: Many things he fore-told, which came to passe, and had bold access to the throne of grace, as if he had been another *Moses*, speaking to God face to face. In his *Homilies* upon *Micah* he hath wonderfull assertions about his predictions. But extraordinary priviledges, and that in some cases onely, must not be extended to all. When the glory of God, and the good of his Church is concerned, God doth come with more familiar discoveries of himself than at other times. But though this be so, yet the godly are many times deceived in themselves and about others, and that because they judge according to outward appearance.

Fourthly, Then are the people of God apt to be deceived about themselves, When they yeeld too much, or give too much credit to the strong affections, and raised zeale, as they thinke, for the glory of God. In such particulars they have many times failed as men, yea so as they have sinned thereby, and offended God. Thus *Peter* did exceedingly fail, Matth. 16. 23. when out of his great affection to his Master, he said, *Master, save thyself;* What a severe reproof did his humane affections meet with? *Get thee behind me Satan, for thou savourest not the things of God, but of man.* Little did *Peter* expect such words for that which he thought was his good will, if not piety to Christ. The like also we find in those Disciples, Luke 9. 55. when they would have fire come from Heaven to be avenged on the *Samaritans*, because they would not receive Christ; for there Christ gave them a check, saying, *Ye know not what spirit ye are of.* They thought that to be a Divine Spirit, they thought the same heavenly breathing and motion to be upon them, as was upon *Elias*; but (alas) they did not know what spirit it was. We find also *Paul* deceived, or at least forbidden in some passages which he thought greatly promoting the glory of God, Act. 16. 6. *Paul was forbidden to preach the Word in Asia,* which implieth a desire and an attempt in him to do it. And vers. 7. *Paul essayed to go into Bythinia, but the Spirit suffered him not.* And often he purposed to come to the Churches he had planted. And although he saith in one place, 1 Thess. 2. 18. *I Paul would have come to you once and again, but Satan hindered;* yet *Satan* could not have hindered, had not God permitted him. So that though *Satan* hindered *Paul* sinfully, yet God did hinder him justly, and for wise ends. Which instances shew, what vehement affections the godly may have, and that as they think for Gods glory, when yet God disposeth farre otherwise. So that as God may sometimes for just and ho-

4. When they give too much credit to their zeal and affections.



ly ends let false prophets speak truth, as *Deut. 13. 1.* a false prophet or dreamer may tell a thing which may come to passe, and the Lord suffer this, to tempt and try his people. Thus *Balaam*, though a wicked man, and a Sorcerer, did prophesie of the happy things that were long after to come upon *Israel*. Yea the *Philistims Priests* and *Diviners*, did by Gods special permission, *1 Sam. 6.* direct to such means about the Ark, and order strange wayes about the milch Kine, to discover whether their evil was of God, or not; and all this proved successfull. As (I say) God may for wise and just ends suffer the Devils instruments to foretell that which is true, and speak aforehand of things that shall and will come to passe; so on the other side, God may sometimes hide things from his own people, yea his own Prophets, so that they may not know them. As *Elijah* told *Gebezi*, *The Lord had hid from him what the Shunamites grief was.* The people of God then are to walk in all humility; and as they are not to believe every spirit, but try the spirit of others; so also they are not to believe their own spirit, but to try that.

5. They may be deceived in the frame of their own hearts.

Fifthly, *The people of God are apt to be deceived about themselves, thinking otherwise than indeed it is, and that about the frames of their heart, in respect of the workings of grace.* As *Paul* received a sentence of death upon himself, so sometimes the children of God, a more terrible sentence upon themselves, even that they are damned, that they are cast-awayes, that God hath forsaken them, that they have no true grace, that all their Religion is but hypocrisie. Even these sad decrees the godly in their temptations do receive in themselves; but God doth not passe this sentence upon them, neither doth the word of God; it is their deceived and tempted heart. Thus also it is for grace, they many times are deceived, thinking they can do those things for God, which when put upon the trial, they cannot. As *Peter* thought, *Though all men should forsake him, yet he would not.* Oh how little do the godly know of their hearts, how mutable, how contradictory to themselves? And all because they think that is not in them, which indeed is. As there are dangerous Rocks in the Sea, when you would think by the waters that cover them all were safe and harmlesse. It was this made *David* so affectionately cry out, *Psal. 19. Who can understand his errours? Cleanse me from secret sins;* and thereupon prayeth, *Keep back thy servant from presumptuous finnes.* Remember that in thy heart there are secret concavities and windings, that it will put on many shapes and forms, seeming an humble heart, when it is proud, an heavenly heart, when it is earthly.



S E R M. LXVII.

*The People of God often pass false judgement upon the dispensations of God towards them. The Reasons from whence this false judgement proceeds, with Rules to prevent it.*

2 C O R. I. 9.

*But we had the sentence of death in our selves, that we might not trust in our selves.*

**W**E have observed from the first part in this Verse, *That even the godly themselves are apt to be deceived about Gods dispensation towards them.* They make false conclusions because they erre in some premisses. It remaineth that after some generall and remote instances, we come to insist on that which the Text affordeth, viz.

*That then the People of God are deceived, when they judge of Gods dealings according to sense and humane helps, not according to Gods power and his promise.* And with this deceit the Children of God are frequently overtaken. How often do we find David in many of his Psalmes thus deluded? what false conclusions doth he many times make about himself and his affaires, and all this did arise because he limiteth God to his own thoughts and expectations; if God remove not such impediments; if his helps come not in before such a time, then they conclude all is hopeles. It is said of the people of *Israel*, that they limited the holy one of *Israel*, Isa. 78. 41. And wherein did this appeare? The Psalmist spake of it before, viz. *Can God furnish a Table in the Wilderneys*; They grant he provided water for them even out of the Rock the streames overflowed: But can he give bread, can he give flesh also? Oh blind and foolish unbelief, Is it not as easie for God to provide bread as water in a dry Wilderneys! but they limited God to their own thoughts and wayes. Now this sinne of limiting God to such humane helps and wayes as we propound to our selves, doth insinuate very much into the hearts of those those that are godly. What was that expression of David, *I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul*, but bitter fruite from that bitter root? Oh how often do the people of God in their extremities say, *Can God furnish a Table in the Wilderneys*? Those millions of thoughts which eat thee up in a dividing distrusting way, how shall this difficulty be overcome, how shall that want be supplied, what if God suffer such a thing to be, then where am I? Is not all this to say, *Can God prepare bread in the Wilderneys*? And this way Paul's desponding thought in this trouble. The extremity is great, death is at hand, there is no way to escape it; but that which deceiveth him, is because he looketh only to sensible helps, he considers the instruments, not the hand in which they are. This is a very secret insinuating sinne, and therefore the godly are more diligently to watch and pray against it, that it do not at any time over-

Gods people are deceived when they judge according to sense not faith.



come them. Take heed of living by sense, The Apostle disclaimeth such a life in the behalf of the godly, *2 Cor. 5. 7. We walk by faith, and not by sense.* Did faith make us overlooke instruments, second causes and all Creatures, how certain and constant would the hopes of the godly man be? The Sun would alwayes go down upon a peaceable fixed, serene frame of heat; but when faith prevaileth and for that composeth the soul, and maketh it like the Rock, which though one wave after another fiercely assault, yet that abideth in the same place still; so though conditions alter, though unheard causes and helps be mutable, yet because God is the same, and the promise is the same, he therefore continueth the same: Let then the Children of God examine and search their hearts more in this particular, see if the cause of all thy disquietness, of all thy troubles and feares do not arise from this, that thou art deceived, that thou passest false judgement upon thy self; certainly the Devill is enemy enough to thy comfort, he indeavours to seduce thee and deceive thee; Do not thou joyn with him against thy own true and solid comfort. But let us proceed to examine the grounds of this truth. And

Reasons.

1. Because the godly are too hasty in their judgings.

The first is, *Because the godly are apt to be hasty and too quick in judging these things.* They do not consider and well weigh all things together. They do not compare Gods promises and his providences together; They do not let Gods word and his workes together, *Insipientis est aspicere ad pauca*, they cast their eyes only upon that which is discouraging. They look upon the dead wombe and not on the power of God, and this inconsiderateness makes them pass false judgement, *Psal. 31. 22. I said in my haste I am cut off from before thy eyes*, and again *Psal. 116. 11. I said in my haste all men are liars.* You see what hasty and sudden thoughts and words may come from those that feare God. Oh do not judge in thy rashness, do not conclude this or that in thy haste, but consider, debate and compare all things together. *Moses* though so meek a man, and the faithfull Servant of God, yet in a suddain haste *spake unadvisedly with his lips.* Examine then, whether most of those thoughts whereby thou hast wronged God and wronged thy self, have not risen from unadvised hastiness. Thou saist in thy haste, *God forsaketh thee*, thou saist in thy haste, *thou shalt be undone.*

2. Because of their feare and anger where-with they are too passionately transported.

2. Another reason why the godly are so apt to be deceived in Gods administrations, is because *they are apt to be passionately transported with anger and feare*; and these are like a misty foggy vapour to the Sun, that doth obnubilate it, and obscure the light. When *David* doth conclude he is cast off, and cut off, he doth not only this in his haste, but in his passions also. It is anger maketh him say so; it is grief maketh him say so; his spirit is often troubled, leavened, and overwhelmed within; so that as when the water is bemuddied, we are not able to see those little stones in the bottome, which when clear we might do: Thus it is here, when the heart is moved with fear and grief, when it is in sad commotions, then it is no wonder if it judge erroneously, *anima sedendo & quiescendo fit sapiens.* Let reason and wisdom, or faith, rather meet thy passionate heart, as *Abigail* did *David*, and this may prevent many sad things, which prove a trouble to thee afterwards: let it therefore be thy wisdom when thou art ready to give this censure, and pass that sentence about thy affaires, or Gods dealings with thee, to stay till the heat and commotions of thy soul be over: fear and anger and grief, these are ill counsellours; erect such a Tribunall in thy self, as they say that of the *Arcopagite* was, no man was to move the affecti- ons by any Rhetoricall indeavours, least thereby the judgement might be per- verted.

3. From the want of spiri- tuall wisdom.

3. Therefore the godly may misjudge and conclude contrary to what God intendeth, *because of the want of that spirituall skill and wisdom*, which is requisite, when we are to inquire or determine about Gods proceedings. Clouds  
and



and darkness saith the Psalmist, *Psal. 29. 7. are round about his pavilion*, and as his essence is a light that none can draw nigh unto; so also his administrations do far exceed our naturall capacity, and therefore we are not able to comprehend his counsell and wayes. Now although this be so, yet as the Scripture is a Directory to us, how we are to conceive of his nature, so it doth also teach us how we are to understand his actions. The Scripture is a Key that doth in some particulars even open the deep things of God; and as *Sampson* out of love did disclose to *Dalilah* such secret things, that none else did or could know, so (setting aside many imperfections in the comparison) doth God out of his love to his Church reveale to them, wherein his strength lyeth, how she may prevaile with him, which way if she take, she is sure to have good acceptance with him; but to receive this, there is a Heavenly wisdom and skill required. When the Apostle *1 Cor. 2. 14, 15, 16.* made a distinction between a naturall man and a spirituall as to their judgement and discerning, (for by the naturall man cannot be meant a weake Christian, as a late Writer would have it, which is the greater wonder, because those of his way (I mean the *Arminians*,) think they strongly conclude *Paul* doth not speak *Rom. 7.* in the person of a regenerate man, because he calls himself *carnall*, and yet this Authour though of the same judgement with them will by a naturall man understand a babe in Christ, or a weak Christian.) The Apostle (I say) making this distinction between these two, saith, *The naturall man receiveth not the things of God, because they are spiritually discerned.* Now there must be alwayes some proportion between the faculty and the object. The eye cannot see musick, nor the eare heare colours, nor doth a Beast understand reason; but then the spirituall man having received the Spirit of God, he judgeth all things, and such have the mind of Christ. There is then that Heavenly and holy wisdom which if we receive from above, if we plow with this Heifer, we are able more exactly and certainly to judge of Gods proceedings then otherwise we could do; for as God giveth it to his people to understand the mysteries of the Gospell, when they are hid from other mens eyes; so to the godly it is impart given to understand the wayes and workes of the Lord, that thereby they may prevent those delusions or deceits which otherwise they are lyable unto. Whereupon it is, that because in this particular as well as in other, *we know but in part*, we have heavenly wisdom but in part. Therefore it is that we do so often miscarry. As in all civill Government there are *arcana imperii*, secrets of state, which only the wise favorite is admitted unto, the single and credulous Subject he believeth the pretences and appearances of things. Thus God also, though in a wise and just manner hath his secrets in governing of his Church, he proceedeth in such methods that to the judgement of flesh and blood do appeare very improbable and unlikely ever to produce any blessed end; and hence it is that the carnall wise men of the world are so often taken in their own craft, and wherein they deale not only proudly, but wisely, God is above them; whereas if they had understood the method of Gods proceedings, they would not have been found so foolishly to fight against God: but the godly have Scripture wisdom and prudence, and therefore are not wholly in the dark, but while they follow them, are kept from those bogs and pits, which others are very ready to fall into; we may instance in some of those Divine Maxims of state. As

1. The understanding of this truth will prevent much false judgment, *viz.* When we consider that God delights to carry on the great things of his Church in a contrary way to humane thoughts and expectations, let us instance in that main foundation of all our comfort and duty, *Christ Crucified* with the benefits and effects flowing from him. Was not this the master-piece of Gods wisdom, and power, and mercy, yet how contrary and unsuitable to the judgement of flesh and blood, for God to be made Man, and Man not in a glorious

Rules for the preventing of false judgements concerning Gods dealings with us.



externall way as the great Potentates of the world, but in a most abject and ignominious way; and then by such an accursed and reproachfull death, to procure our pardon of sinne, and acceptation with God; it hath so much absurdity in it to flesh and bloud, *that to the Jewes it was a stumbling block, and to the Gentiles foolishness. Non pudet, quia pudendum omnino credibile, quia prorsus impossibile.* What the thoughts of men were about Christ, while working out our redemption, appeareth *Isa. 13. 2, 3, 4.* *There is no beauty that we should desire him, he is despised and rejected of men, we did esteem him smitten of God;* So that generally all the Nations of the Jewes were deceived about a Messiah; yea the Disciples themselves were full of prejudices in this point. This then is Gods way to do the great things of his Church, in a super-humane way; So that even then when the things themselves are not super-naturall, yet the manner of accomplishing them is wholly above nature. What therefore God speaketh in one case to his people about the pardon of sinne, *Isa. 55. 8, 9.* is true in all the rest of Gods administrations, *My thoughts are not as your thoughts; For as the Heavens are higher then the Earth, so are my wayes higher then yours.* By this it is plain, that a Dwarf is as able to reach to the Heavens, as we are to comprehend Gods wayes; so that whatsoever God doth for thee whether body or soul, it is a mystery. All will be wonderfull, and marvelous in thy eyes; As he said that was not worthy the name of eloquence which did not beget admiration in the Hearers; So the Lord accounteth of nothing as befitting his Majesty which may not put the soul in admiration: possess thy soul with this principle, and thou wilt not be often in thy complaints; I looked for this and hoped for that, but God hath taken away that I never dreamed off.

2. Another Rule is, *That when God hath promised to do any thing for his people, yet he doth for the most part seem to go contrary to it, especially at first, as when Abraham was promised a great Posterity; David a Kingdome,* they met at first with nothing, but what did make against these, so that his providence did seem to gainsay his promise. Now if this be not known, how quickly will the godly be deceived. The world was a great Chaos and confusion before it was made so glorious as now it is.

3. This will prevent mistake also, when we consider, *That God doth usually hide himselfe and deny help, till every thing be desperate, and then he cometh to help.* When the poore creple that lay so many years, and could not be put into the Poole, said, *I have no help,* then Christ healed him; Christ did not provide Wine at the Marriage Feast till all was spent; *Moses* cometh when the task of brick is doubled; in the Mount the Lord will be seen. Would not this truth alone deliver thee from many conclusions, as if God had forsaken thee, and would be mercifull no more. What if Christ do with thee as that Woman of *Canaan* to put thee off, to call thee *Dog*? Is it not to provoke thy faith and importunity more?

4. The Heavenly Artist remembers this Rule also, *That God will sometimes alter his ordinary wayes, do things because of his sovereignty and prerogative.* What Disputes and different thoughts had *Job* and his friends about Gods dealing with him in his particular, wherein both *Job* and his friends were at a loss; only *Job* spake more rightly then they? Yet God discovereth his greatness and Majesty to *Job*, thereby informing of him that he did not sufficiently consider his own weakenesse, and Gods infinite greatness.

5. And lastly, *God delights to put his people upon a life of faith, and that in temporall and spirituall mercies, The just shall live by his faith.* This faith doth exalt God and debase man; now faith and sense they are opposite, one flyeth up to Heaven, the other crawlth on the ground; and therefore



therefore the most believing Christian is the least erring. As the Astronomer judgeth not by sense, but his Artificiall Instruments, of the celestiall bodies, and that maketh him not deceived: Thus judge by faith, speake by faith, conclude by faith, and then thou wilt not fall into the Ditch.



## SERM. LXVIII.

*Of humane and divine Trust, and of the true and proper Objects of our Confidence.*

2 COR. I. 9.

*That we should not trust in our selves, but in God, which raiseth the dead.*

**T**He trouble which came upon *Paul* in *Asia* being described in severall aggravating particulars, the next thing he intends, is to informe us about the holy and gracious end which God intended in all this. The Lords purpose was by this heavy exercise to bring *Paul* off from all self-confidence, to weane him from all humane props, to teach him to depend upon God alone. Even *Paul* though so great a proficient in holiness, who doth propound himself a patterne for others to follow, yet he needeth this self-emptying, he is prone to have some secret confidence in himself, and therefore God as the wise Physician provideth some bitter Pills to kill such Wormes as these. The last spirituall enemy which grace is to destroy in a regenerate man, is *self-dependence*: so hard a matter is it to be wholly wrought out of our self, that God may be all and we nothing. The small cause therefore of this trouble we have here most divinely described by *Paul*, which is set down first Negatively, *That we might not trust in our selves*, Then Positively, *but in God*, with the reason of it, *he raiseth from the dead*; Let us consider the Negative *that we may not trust in our selves*. The Greek word *πιστα*, is used sometimes in Scripture of a divine trust, and sometimes of an humane, of a divine trust, *Heb. 2. 13. ἐγὼ πιστεύω τῷ κυρίῳ*, I will trust in him, *Eph. 3. 12. In whom we have access πιστεύοντες*, with confidence. In the Old Testament the expression of trusting in God is often used, so that by this word is excellently described one act of faith, whereby the soul sinking as it were under difficulties doth firmly and powerfully lay hold on Christ. Thus the grace of faith putteth us upon the renouncing of all the wisdom, power, and excellency of Men and Angels, to judge every Creature, but an easie shadow in comparison of God. This fiduciaall resting of the soul on God by faith, is constantly to be put forth in all Spirituall and temporals of the soul; it is indeed a spirituall and supernaturall lesson, very hard for flesh and blood to learne, which useth to swim with bladders, to walk with crutches, to have alwaies some humane and earthly prop or other; but yet God doth teach his people this mystery, and acquaints them with this Heavenly art to trust in him only, and not in any Creature. This fiduciaall relying of the soul is made by some Learned Men to be only an effect of faith. The Papists make it an act of divine hope. But the most Orthodox do maintaine that this is an essentiall thing

Two sorts of trust, humane and divine.



thing in faith, yea that the greatest perfection of faith lyeth not in knowing, or giving firme assent, but in confidence; and therefore by this they do chiefly define it, although it may be granted that there is also a confidence, or trust which is produced by faith, as that place *Ephes. 3. 12.* seemeth to intimate, where we are said to *have confidence by faith.* There is then a divine trust, which is nothing but faith, whereby the heart of a godly man is inabled under all discouragements though the Fig tree faile, though the Olive tree blossome not, to depend upon the Lord; yea with *Paul* to know *how to abound and to want*, because it is not Creatures, not this or that condition which supports him, but God alone, and therefore the goodness and power of God being alwayes the same, his heart is the same. This is like an Ark to him in the midst of waters. This trusting in God must be while we have meanes, as well as when we have them not; so when we have outward supports, its hard to know whether the heart doth rest on them or God only; But of this more in the Positive part.

2. There is an *humane trust* on confidence, and that is either in a good sence or a bad sence: A good sence, as when the Apostle writing to believers, doth often profess his confidence in them concerning their faithfullness and perseverance *Gal. 5. 10. 2 Thess. 3. 4.* Which confidence (unless *Paul* spake as having the gift of discerning of spirits) was within the bounds of humane principles, and so not like that confidence which a man may have about his own estate, as when *Paul* saith of himself, *Heb. 13. 18. πιστοῦμαι, we trust we have a good conscience*, for this confidence is either an act of faith, or the sence of it in the soul. In the next place, the Scripture speaketh of an humane confidence, but in an ill and sinfull sence, as *Luke 18. 9.* When the *Pharisees* are said to *trust in themselves*, and *Rom. 2. 19.* some were confident they were leaders of the blind, and yet lived in evill wayes, so *Phil. 3. 3.* There is a putting confidence in the flesh, which was a sinne, that *Paul* was highly guilty, of while a *Pharisee*, and that which did chiefly keep him off from faith in Christ. Now it is this humane sinfull trusting in our selves, that the Apostle here speaketh of, and which God would prevent in *Paul.* From the end of God then so graciously intended in *Paul's* trouble, two things are observable.

Selfe-confidence a great sinne.

1. That selfe confidence or trusting in our selves, is a sinne so highly displeasing to God, that he doth often chastise his people in an heavy manner to prevent it.

2. That even the most eminent of the Children of God are very prone to trust in themselves. Concerning the first, it will be very usefull to open the nature of this self-trusting, it being a sinne secretly involved and latent in our breasts, that without much spirituall illumination and sanctification, we are not able to know when we are guilty of it. To cleare therefore the nature of it, we are to consider:

Propositions clearing the nature of self-confidence.

1. All Creatures necessitated to trust in something.

1. That a man being a very infirme and weak miserable thing, is therefore necessitated to trust in some thing or other. Our very trusting doth denote our great impotency; for God because he is omnipotent, wise, allsufficient, and happy in himself, therefore he cannot trust in any, he is able to bring about what he willeth; but the rationall Creature, even because a Creature, whether Men or Angels, do necessarily put their trust some where; so that what the center is to the stone in its motion it is restless till it come thither; Thus the soul of a man is in restless motions and constant trepidations till it fix it self upon that object it trusteth to, and when it is there, the soul is no longer in *motu*, but in *quiete*. The very nature then of trusting, and the actings thereof do proclaim thy inability and insufficiency. It is because thou art a depending Creature, and not like God allsufficient, that thou art necessitated to trust in some thing without.

2. This



2. *This trusting by originall sinne is horribly corrupted and perverted, as well as the other actings and powers of the soul; for it is wholly perverted in respect of the object.* We trust in that, we ought not to do, setting a Creature in the roome of God, and thereby become guilty of secret, but horrible idolatry, and that which is the true and adequate object of our trusting, that we neglect. Infomuch that there is no man living till regenerated, that doth put his trust in God, but trusteth in man, in the second causes, in his own selfe. Thus like a Worme he is alwayes crawling upon the ground, and therefore if the Creatures and humane helps are removed from him, he looketh upon himselfe as undone, he hath no more hope abiding in him. This argueth the Creature, not God, is the object of our trusting; whereas there ought to be the same object of faith, and trust (I speake as these are divine acts, not of humane faith and hope) and therefore as we may not believe in any but God; so neither trust in any. Every thing that is divine and supernaturall, must be terminated upon God himselfe. Therefore we say that the Church of Rome by her principles can teach no higher a faith then what is meer humane, because the ultimate motive, in which they resolve their belief, is the Authority of the Church, which though they would make a divine motive, yet cannot by any more then humane. This it is in Practicalls as well as Doctrinalls. A man carried by no higher principle then nature, can never trust in any thing but a Creature. There is required as much supernaturall and divine influence to trust in God, as to the exercise of any other grace; yea in some respects more. But man being so enslaved to lust, and to a concupiscentiall love of the Creature some way or other: Hence it is that a great part of his sinfullness against God is in perverse and corrupted trusting, which is a sin that doth not make such a terrible guilt and noise in the Conscience of a man; but it is that which is almost the life and vigor of every sinne. All sinne is therefore committed because a man doth trust in some Creature or other, and that admirable choice way of Evangelicall Righteousnesse of Gospell justification, yea and the whole treasury of riches of grace in Christ, is opposed by no sinne, so much as a self righteousness; as we see in Paul before his conversion: Paul was no prophane man, no lover of excesse and rior, his conversation was very holy and unblameable as to the Law. But his selfe-trusting, his selfe-righteousnesse made him a greater enemy to the Gospell-grace, then any prophanenes did most enormous men.

2. Our trust is corrupted by originall sin.

3. *Our trusting and confidence being naturally thus put from God the right object, hence it is that it emptyeth it selfe into many streames, infomuch that we have as many sinfull confidences almost as there are Creatures in the world.* As the Prophet told the people of Israel, that his gods multiplied according to their Cities, they had as many Idols as such places; so we may enlarge it about carnall confidence, and say, it is according to all the Creatures and comforts we do enjoy. Infomuch that when our Saviour said Mark 10. 24. *That it was impossible for such who trust in riches to be saved;* the Disciples cry out, *Who then can be saved?* signifying thereby, that every man hath somewhat he doth trust in, as well as the rich man, his riches: And because particular things do most affect, let us instance in some things which are commonly made the objects of mens trust. And do you apply which of all these thy heart is fixed upon by trusting in it; for thou wilt find whatsoever it is beside God, it will prove a lye to thee; and as they did by insultation say to Christ, *he trusted in God, let him save him;* so this will be a true derision at the day of judgement to every man offending this way. Thou didst trust in the power and favour of men, *let them save thee from Hell, let them free thee from*

3. Hence our trust is placed upon many false objects.

damnation.



*damnation.* Another he did put his trust in his wealth, he boasted himselfe of that, now *let thy wealth save thee*, let that make thee escape those everlasting torments if they can. Every man hath some thing or other in his heart he trusteth to, as the Ivy that *textilis filva*, a weaved wood, as *Tertullian* calls it, cannot grow without some Tree or Wall to leane upon; so neither can the heart of a man move or stirre without dependance upon some Creature or other. They did in their Sacrifice for the *Muses* and *Learning* offer Ivy to *Apollo*, to shew that Learning would not or could not grow without civill incouragement; yea and the Scripture doth often compare the *Church of God to a Vine*, and amongst other reasons this may be one, because the *Vine* cannot grow unless something else beare it up. It is not like other Trees that beare up themselves. Thus both the world and the Church of God, one is like a Vine, the other like Ivy. They cannot like the earth be centred on nothing, there must be suppediments to beare them up. And because a naturall man wants the life of faith, which would settle him on God only; therefore he runeth out to innumerable Crutches to help himselfe with; as some Creatures for want of bloud abound with many feet to help them in their motion. Now the Scripture doth suggest most of these to us. And

1. Some trust  
in their wickedness.

1. Which is indeed the worst of all, is, *When a man trusteth in his own wickedness*, and beareth himselfe up with that. There are such Sonnes of *Belial*, such monsters of impiety, that do only comfort and support themselves with the iniquities they have committed, *Isai. 30. 12.* Some are there shrapely reprov'd for trusting in oppression, in perverseness, and fraud, and *stay thereon*: An expression the Scripture doth much delight to use, when it speaketh of trusting. Here you see because men are subtle, and powerfull, and successfull in wickedness, they are apt to trust in this; but see what bitterness will be in the latter end, *Verse 13.* Their iniquity should be like a Wall swelling out ready to make a breach, when a man thinketh to lean on it, presently it falleth and overwhelmeth him. The *Psalmist* also *Psalm 62. 10.* speaking of the vanity of men even in the highest degree, he adviseth them not to trust in oppression and robbery, in unjust and sinfull wayes. Not to say with him in the Poet, *Virtus mihi numen, & ensis, quem tenco*, My Manhood and my Sword is my God; for how often hath God by tragicall instances in the world made it appeare that such mighty *Nimrods* had no more then a Spiders Web to trust in: To trust then in sinfull wayes is the highest degree of folly.

2. Humane  
power and  
strength.

2. The Scripture informeth of another sinfull object we are apt to trust in, and that is *humane power and strength*. Who would not think, that where the greatest might is, there is the greatest cause of confidence. Yet how often doth God infeeble the greatest power, and blast the greatest strength, and all that men should not trust in themselves. God would have the Symbole of *Sampsons* strength to be in his haire, the weakest part about him, that so he might see his power was from God only. How often doth God complaine of *Israel* of his sinfull confidence? *Isaiah 36. 7.* They would go down to *Agypt*, they would rest in the Chariots and Horses of *Agypt*; when yet they were but flesh, and not spirit. Nothing that is weak must we lean upon, least it break under us, *Psalm 146. 3.* Put not your trust in Princes, and the reason is, *because his breath goeth forth, he returneth to the earth, Jerem. 17. 5, 6.* You have there a curse pronounced against every one that shall trust in man; the unprofitableness also and ill success of all such trusting in man, yet how naturall is this sinne to us. To think if we have the favour, the helpe of those



those who are great in the world to trust in this more then in God, though it be such a sinne that the Scripture doth scarce speake more terribly against any other. There is a politicall and civill Idolatry, as well as a spirituall and ecclesiasticall one; and never did superstitious foules more devoutly pray to their Saints and adore those Images than these do flatter, and attend upon such humane helps and powers, that may outwardly advance them. As it hath been the high impiety of some Potentates in the world to arrogate a deity to themselves; no lesse impiety is it in inferiors to depend upon them for their help as if they were Gods, and to fear to offend them more then God himself.

3. Another sinfull way of trussing, *Is when we put our confidence in our wealth and riches and such outward greatness.* It is so hard to have riches and not to trust in them, that what our Eyangelist calleth having riches, Mark calleth it *trussing in them.* It is the mighty work of Gods grace, if thou dost not trust in these, when God maketh them increase, and not to say of them as the Israelites of their molten Calf, *these are thy gods O Israel.* Hence it is that Paul 1 Tim. 6. 17. will have the Ministers of God deale with great zeale and boldness to such; *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God.* Though they be uncertain riches; though they make themselves wings and flye away; yet how apt are we to put trust in them, but God is the living God, alwayes the same; whether thou art living or dying, he is the same God; for this end *covetousness* is called *Idolatry*, Col. 3. 5. There is no rich man, unless made humble by grace, and rich in God, but his wealth is his God. No godly man can so heartily trust in God, as he doth in his wealth. Job was forced to purge himself from this sinne, as that which could not stand with integrity. *If I have made Gold my hope, or have said to fine Gold thou art my confidence; If I have rejoyced because my wealth was great,* Job. 3. 25, 26. If Job had done thus, he must have acknowledged then he had been an Hypocrite. Take heed then of this close lurking sinne. It would be endless to reckon up all the externall objects that we may sinfully trust in. Therefore the next kind of sinfull trussing to be named, is concerning that which is spirituall and more subtilly carryed on; for Paul could not trust in himself after this manner, he had no outward power, nor wealth to put confidence in. It was therefore something more close and refined.

3. Wealth.

R F

SERN.





## S E R M. LXIX.

*What are those secret and inward objects, that men are apt to place their Confidence in; and wherein even the Saints themselves may be guilty of that sinne.*

2 C O R. I. 9.

*That we should not trust in our selves.*

**T**He Lord (we heard) doth so greatly abhorre self-trusting, that the end of these manifold troubles which are brought on the godly, is to mortifie and kill this sinne.

There are two streams into which this sinfull trusting doth empty it self.

The first is *External* and *visible*, such as power and riches; for this may be called *trusting in our selves*; partly because we look upon them, as ours; and partly it is opposite to trusting in God.

The second stream into which sinfull trusting conveys it self, is that which is *Internal* and *invisible*; and of this *Paul* doth principally speak. So that it will be very usefull to enquire into those secret and soul-things, which a man may put his trust in. No man can live without trusting in some thing or other, any more than a man can walk without legs, or a bird fly without wings: But of all trustings, those are most dangerous and unobservable, which are put forth about that which lieth latent in us. And

What are those inward things, which a man is apt to trust in.

1. In his own heart.

First, The Scripture speaketh of that sinfull trusting, which every natural man is in an high manner guilty of, and that is, *To trust in a mans own heart.* *Pro. 28. 26. He that trusteth in his own heart, is a fool.* Now is not the world full of such fools? Yea the Church of God? Is not every unregenerate man this fool? Can you persuade him that his heart is naught, that he is in a state of gall and bitterness? What is the reason, that under so many powerfull discoveries out of Gods word, every hearer doth not wring his hands, smite upon the brest, cry out, he is undone, he is found out to be a sinner, he cannot flatter and deceive himself any longer? Whence (I say) is it, that most do sit so sottishly, so securely and senselessly under the preaching of the Word? Is it not because they *trust in their hearts*? They thank God they have a good heart, their heart is right; and all this while, if they did truly know, what true grace meaneth, and how short they come of it, they would be amazed, and not able to open their mouths for their justification any longer. And the truth is we may call this the damning sin. This is that which destroyeth soul and body, that though men are afar off from the way of grace, though they wallow in their lusts, yet they trust in their hearts for all this. *Prov. 21. 2. Every mans way is right in his own eyes, but the Lord pondereth the hearts.* It is no matter what thy thoughts, thy persuasions are, but how doth the Lord account thee? Men are subject to a two-fold great mistake:

1. They



1. They mistake about the *Nature of Godliness*, they understand not what it is, how high and rare a thing that few do attain it; They take civility for godliness, they take the outward performance of religious duties for godliness; they take some sudden pangs and fits of devotion for godliness: Thus they judge copper to be gold. But

In the next place, if they do understand what it is to be regenerated, how great a matter it is to be a *New Creature*, then such is their self-love, that they presently apply it to themselves, and do believe they are such ones. For this end is that duty so often commended, *To commune with our own hearts, to try and search our own hearts.* For this end we are informed of the *deceitfulness* and *desperate wickedness* of the heart, that no man knoweth it, that God only knoweth it. Thou boastest of thy heart, thou trustest in thy heart. Ah poor deluded wretch, thou knowest not what a sea of evil thy heart is; till grace shine into that dark dungeon, thou canst never perceive the loathsome lusts that crawl there. Pray therefore to be delivered from this heart-trusting, as from hell it self. It is this that is the *Beelzebub* sinne. This maketh thee shut thy eyes, stop thy ears, harden thy heart; and therefore till this root be pulled up, no preaching, no Ministry can do thee any good. For the first thing done by converting grace, is to take away this trusting in our selves, and in stead thereof to work an holy despair in our selves. This the Spirit of God doth by convincing of sinne through the Law: by this we see our selves a sinfull people, and a cursed people; we are also convinced of our impotency and insufficiency to help our selves. By this we are convinced that it must be the righteousness of another, even of Christ himself, and not our own, that we must appear in; when we approach unto God. Till therefore thou art in this heart-trusting way, as long as this good perswasion and secure thoughts are in thy self, thou art wholly out of the way to Heaven. This is not the way to Christ; if thou art not wounded, the good *Samaritan* will pour no oil into thee; if thou dost not judge all things husks, and seeest thy self ready to famish, there will no entertainment be given to thee at thy fathers house. Oh then that the Spirit of God would in a mighty and powerfull manner fall upon such sinfull confiders, that he would shake the very foundations of their souls. For as long as this self-trusting abideth in thee, thy condition is incurable; if the heart be deceitfull above all things, why dost thou believe it above all things? Thou believest thy own heart more than Gods word, more than the Ministers of God. No man doubteth of his heart, none questioneth or examineth his heart, and therefore cometh not to the Word preached, to have that purged, to have that cleansed, but takes it for an undoubted principle, that his heart is good already. But how cometh it to be good? When was it made good? by nature it is full of evil, and therefore it can never be sanctified, but by the grace of God effectually working by the Ministry.

Secondly, The Scripture instanceth in another object of *sinfull trusting*, that is secret and close, but also very dangerous, and that is in the *righteousnesse we conceit we have*; and this was the great pharisaical sinne. This was the Camels bunch; this made them stand in such immediate opposition to Christ, that they rejected his Person and Offices; They did not look upon themselves as sick, and therefore would not admit of a Physician. And oh that this sinne had been like *Jonah's* gourd that sprang up for a day only, and presently was consumed; but it is a sinne that passeth from one generation to another, to put confidence in their own righteousness, to seek to be justified by the works they do; Doth not this reign in Popish spirits, in all formalists, in civil and moral men? Do they not look to be saved, to be justified by their works of righteousness and charity? How often doth the Scripture thunder against this sinne? And indeed

2. Self-righteousnesse.



well it may, for it maketh our selves our own Christs, our own Saviours. It maketh Christ to die in vain. Now how natural and imbred a sinne this is, appeareth by the *Jewes*, Rom. 10. 3. *They went about to establish their own righteousness, and would not submit themselves to the righteousness of faith.* Hence because this sinne did so reign in the Pharisees, our Saviour spake that excellent Parable, *Luke 18. 9.* concerning a Publican humbling himself, and sensible of his unworthiness, as being justified rather than a Pharisee; *He spake this* (saith the Text) *to certain who trusted in themselves, that they were righteous.* And why doth our Saviour make those blessed, that mourn, that are poor in spirit, that hunger and thirst after righteousness? but to shew in what a blasted and cursed estate they are, who put any trust in the good works they do to be justified by them. You see then by this, how dangerous and damnable a thing that common sinne is, which every civil, every just and righteous man is apt to lean upon; if his eyes were opened, and his heart made tender, he would not dare to eat, or sleep, or stay one night in it, as good and safe, as now he believeth it to be.

3. Church-priviledges.

Thirdly, Another object of this sinfull secret trusting, is in *spiritual or Church-priviledges, or Ordinances, that we have more than others.* This is also like the *Psalmists* plague, which destroyeth at Mid-day, thousands fall dead into hell, because of this religious trusting in priviledges and Ordinances. They trust in them, not regarding what holiness and godliness God doth require of them. How palpably did the Prophet *Jeremiah* reprove this in the *Jewes*, Jer. 7. 4. *Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The Temple, the Temple of the Lord are these; but amend your wayes, and your doings, as vers. 3.* When the Prophet exhorts them to repentance and reformation, then they plead, *The Temple of the Lord, and the Ordinances.* This is so enticing a sinne, that in the Christian Church many were perswaded by false Teachers, *That unlesse they were circumcised, and kept up the Rites of the Ceremonial Law, they could not be justified.* Therefore the Apostle speaketh excellently, *Phil. 3. 3.* *We are the circumcision, which rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* When it cometh to this, that thou doest not trust in Duties, or in Ordinances, but in Christ, in them then art thou a true worshipper of God in the Spirit. In the same Chapter *Paul* layeth upon his own heart, what trust and confidence he once had in his being a *Jew*, in being circumcised, in his legal righteousness. But when it pleased God to reveal Christ to him, What, doth he trust in these priviledges any longer? No by no means, for *he accounts all things but dung and losse in comparison of that righteousness which is by faith in Christ.* Is not this likewise an universal predominant sinne amongst Christians? Do they not trust in their Christianity, in their prayers, in their Baptisme, in receiving of the Lords Supper? They put confidence in these things, as if they were God and Christ. Neither have the Ministers of the Gospel lesse work to do with Christians in this respect, than the Prophets had of old with the *Jewes*. Insomuch that then onely we come to be a spiritual people, when we can discern between Ordinances and Christ in the Ordinances; when we look upon Duties as the field, and Christ as the pearl hid in that field. When we look upon the Ordinances as the hemme of Christs garment we touch, but we look for vertue to come forth from Christ himself. But when shall the Ministers of the Gospel perswade in this matter? How long will it be ere you put a difference between doing a duty, and trusting in a duty, between presence at an Ordinance, and enjoying Christ himself in that Ordinance. And thus farre men destitute of true solid grace, may yet have some external apparent righteousness, and other spiritual objects to rest upon.

Let us in the next place consider, *Wherein a godly man, yea an eminent Paul may*



may become guilty of trusting in himself. For seeing God hath taken that way for our justification, which is wholly to take us off our selves; and the Gospel-grace is therefore exalted, that we may be debased; how can it come about that the dregs of this sinne should full be polluting the most holy man? But

First, Even a *Paul*, an eminent godly man, may sinfully trust in those spiritual gifts and assistance, which God hath vouchsafed to him rather than others. This spark of fire will quickly kindle in tinder. Hath God given a man great gifts, great abilities in prayer, great enlargements above others: It must be the great work of grace to keep this man humble and low, so as not to trust on them. 2 Cor. 12. 7. *Paul* there declareth what wonderfull honour God had vouchsafed to him; he was lifted up to the third Heaven; he had abundance of revelations. So that God did in many extraordinary wayes communicate himself to *Paul*. But could *Paul* be thus lifted up upon the pinnacle, and his head not turn round? Can he drink of this wine, and not be giddy? No, he is in much danger; and therefore observe what way God taketh with him at the seventh verse, *Lest I should be puffed up above measure, there was given me a thorne in the flesh, a messenger from Satan to buffet me.* What this was is greatly disputed by the learned; to be sure it was so heavy and burdensome a temptation, that he prayed to God often, *That it might be removed*, but God would not take it off; and the reason is twice declared, *Lest I should be puffed up above measure*; what is this but to have confidence in his gifts and revelations with those extraordinary dispensations of Gods love to him. If then the greene Tree be so apt to receive these sparkes of vain-glory and self-confidence, what shall the dry Tree do? Examine then thy self, the more Gods assistance is with thee, Art thou the more lowly in thy owne eyes? Doeest thou find an holy fear and trembling under these approaches of God to thy soul? Art thou affected at these wonderfull workings of God upon thee, as *Peter*, when he saw that great miracle about the fishes, presently to remember his own sinfulness: Or as those in the Old Testament, who when they had any glorious apparitions of God vouchsafed to them, were so considerative of their own frailty and imbecillity, that they generally thought they should die immediately? Thus the more Gods gifts abound in thee, doeest thou the more go out of thy self? And think, now I am in a temptation, the Devil is ready to puffe up with self-content, and so to make these great gifts to become a snare to thee; to turn these earrings (as it were) of gold, into an Idol to worship it. This is the reason (say some) why *Ezekiel* is so often called *Sonne of man*, because of those great visions he had in reference to *Jerusalem*. And *Daniel* likewise is once called the *Sonne of man*, for he had great revelations concerning the Church of God. Now this Title of *Son of man* might greatly debase him under those great priviledges. God seldome useth his people as great instruments in his service, but he doth something or other that shall be like a *Memento esse hominem*. Even as that hand of *Moses*, in the stretching out whereof so many miracles were wrought, was affected with a Leprosie, that so the power might be given to God, and not to *Moses*. Thus God doth wisely mingle gifts and infirmities, dispenseth glorious priviledges, and manifold chastisements, that so the balance may descend downwards, as much as it ascends upwards: That a gracious man should have that true in him, which is said of the Element, *Intantum ascendit, in quantum descendit*.

How even a godly man may be guilty of self-confidence, by trusting,  
1. In his spiritual gifts.

Secondly, A godly man may sinfully trust in his Graces, in his Holiness,

2. In his graces.



nesse, in his faith, and love of Christ. So that what the pharisaical man doth about his apparent and external holinesse, the godly man in some measure may doe about his real graces. Insomuch that many times they have not the reward of a duty, and the comfort of it in their own hearts, by secret pride and confidence arising in their heart after they have done. Therefore as pure motives are to beginne, so be sure in the same to conclude thy holy duties. Let not the Dragon devour the child as soon as it is borne. Take heed of that *Euge Bernarde, benedicis*. Thou preachest well, thou prayest well, thy heart hath been as thou wouldst have it. For this is the danger of self-confidence, it breedeth out of holy duties; other sins are committed, because of sinfull temptations; but here poison is sucked from the sweet herb, and thy evil ariseth from thy good. No wonder then if the godly have many exhortations, *To worke out their salvation with fear and trembling. Not to be high-minded but fear. Though they stand, to take heed lest they fall*; for they are apt to trust in their own strength, and their own power; and this maketh way for their fall, as in *Peter*, Mark 14. 31. He would not believe he should deny Christ, though the Lord told him he would: Yea the more vehemently he affirmed he would not, though he should die: Yea, saith the same Evangelist, *Likewise also said they all*. They were all confident as well as *Peter*, though not so much; yet as *Peter* did grossly deny Christ, so all the rest fled from him. By this you see how dangerous it is to put any trust in our owne graces. Remember that place *Ezek. 33. 13. If a righteous man trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, &c.* By trusting to himself he begins to fall.

Let then the Use be even to those who are most godly, to take heed and watch against this subtil sinne that may be in thy heart, that may creep into thy graces, into thy duties: When thou thinkest thy self most free, even then may it have the greatest hold upon thee: Others sinnes come like a roaring Lion, this like a glistering Serpent. In other things thy sinnes hurt thee, here thy graces and duties make thee fall. *Hizekiah* humbled himselfe in his sicknesse, but in his mercies, his heart was lifted up. Come off from all duties, and all religious performances, with trembling reflections upon thy self.





# SERM, LXX.

*Whether Paul speaketh these words in his own person : And wherein the sinfulness of Self-confidence appears.*

2 COR. I. 9.

*That we should not trust in our selves.*

**T**He second Observation from the words was, *That even the Paul's, the most holy and eminent men, are prone to this sinne of trusting in themselves.*

The great end why God did thus exercise Paul, it was to prevent this sinne above any other. Paul (you heard) had no riches, no honours, no earthly power to confide in. Therefore his parts, his revelations, his graces, from these did arise his danger.

But before we come to explain the Doctrine and amplifie it, one Question is to be answered, and that is, *Whether the Apostle speak this in regard of his own person, or by a figure assumes the person of other godly men?* For that is many times the custom of the Apostle to joyn himself in number with such, whose infirmities he doth not partake of, or is guilty of, as 1 Cor. II. 31. *If we would judge our selves, we should not be judged of the Lord,* putting himself in the number of those who came unworthily to the Lords Supper. For Chrysostome doth so admire the high degree of grace in Paul, that he thinketh Paul doth not say this, because of himself, but by way of instruction to others. There is also a late learned Writer (*Amyraldus Confid. in 7. cap. ad Romanos, & contra Gal. Rivertum.*) who thinketh it an assertion no way worthy of reproof, if we say Paul had even in this life more grace than some glorified Saints may have in Heaven. So that he will acknowledge Paul, if not the other Apostles, by a singular and extraordinary priviledge, to have obtained perfection. From whence he gathers, that to expound that Rom. 7. of Paul as regenerated, as if he found the law of sinne captivating of him, is to be highly dishonouring of that great Apostle, and is signally injurious to the grace of the Gospel. And if this be so, then we cannot say, that Paul spake this for himself, but for others. For if he had attained to such a state of perfection, there was no danger of pride or self-confidence. To make this his opinion good, he observeth, That we do not find Paul charged with any *infirmity*, any defect, after he was converted. And besides, he propounds himself, as an example and a patern, which could not be, if what is said in Rom. 7. were true in his own person.

Whether Paul speaketh these words in his own person.

I shall not enter upon the Exposition of that Chapter. But certainly that which is here attributed to Paul, he would with the same fear and trembling reject, as he did the divine worship the Barbarians would have given to him. For although it cannot be denied, but that God did furnish Paul with much grace, far above many others, yet that he thought not of any perfection in him, appeareth 1 Cor. 4. 4. where he saith, though he knew nothing concerning himself, as to the



the discharge of his publick Ministry in any wilfull careless way, yet he was not justified thereby, because it was God that did judge him. God knew more evil and corruption in *Paul*, than *Paul* himself was ever able to discover. Besides this Doctrine of *Paul*'s perfection would overthrow his justification by the righteousness of Christ, whereas he doth in a most affectionate manner, *Phil. 3.8,9. Count all things dung and drosse, to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, but that which is by faith.* Hence he saith, *Not as if I had already attained, or were made perfect.* Yea we read of defects in *Paul* after his conversion, as that which *Amyraldus* instanceth in, of the *paroxysm* or bitter contention between *Paul* and *Barnabas*. For although the Scripture, as he observeth, doth not relate who was in the fault, yet it appeareth very probably, that both had their passions too inordinately breaking forth at that time. Besides that was a plain defect of a sudden perturbation in *Paul*, when being smitten by the Highpriest, he replied as it seemeth in a sinfull commotion, *God shall smite thee thou painted wall*; which upon information he presently retracts. Neither can that be an excuse which some make, that he did not know him to be the Highpriest, because of the corrupt customes they had about bestowing the Priesthood as they pleased. For *Paul* said to him that did sit to judge him, *Sittest thou to judge me* (saith he) *after the Law?* *Act. 23.3.* Therefore I suppose that the best interpretation of *ex nescio*, *I know not*, *I wist not*, is this, *I attended not*, *I minded it not*. The injurious dealing *Paul* met with, made him forget his duty; so that he did not attend to this, that he was a Magistrate, and though a wicked and unjust one, yet not to be reviled. And that *Paul* had corruption within him ready to break forth upon occasions, appeareth *2 Cor. 12.* by Gods dispensation to him in that affliction, which he calleth a *thorn in the flesh*, and the messenger of *Satan* buffeting of him. I would easily yeeld to that learned man, That the *thorn in the flesh* was not libidinous or lustfull temptations, which some have thought, not so much for that reason which he giveth, that it is likely God would cure one sinne by another sinne, a lesse sinne by a greater. (For carnal finnes are said to be lesse than spiritual; and it is often Gods way, to cure the finnes of his people by letting them fall into sinne, driving out poison by poison) as because the Context doth more incline another way, as might be shewed. Yea there is one place, which puts it out of all doubt, that *Paul* needed both afflictions from God, and voluntary humiliations of himself, lest sparks within should quickly become a flame, by that known place, *1 Cor. 9.22. I keep under my body, and bring it in subjection, lest when I have preached to others I my self become a cast-away.* It's an allusion to those who runne in a race, as the verse precedent sheweth, who did strictly observe their diet and order, their body being temperate in all things, that they might obtain victory. Thus *Paul* in his Christian race was jealous of corruption arising in him, and clogging of him, and so retard him therein.

This I have been the larger upon, because it maketh the more for the comfort of the godly to know, that even such as *Paul* had so much corruption and evil within them, as well as they, that did not the Lord use several means to humble them, were he not alwayes filing of their rust, cleansing out their spots, they would quickly become very loathsome and unclean.

Now in the pursuing of this Doctrine, because I have already opened the nature of this self-trusting; I shall only aggravate the evil of it, that because the godly are so prone to it, they may the more bewail it, and watch against it. And certainly the people of God doe not thinke and meditate upon the evil of this sinne enough, you heare them complaining often of other finnes, they lie heavy upon their hearts, but very little of this; whereas this is like sweet poison, it destroyeth, and you feelee it not. And

First,



First, It must needs be a sinne highly displeasing God, *Because he doth so severely chastise his own people to prevent this sinne.* The sharper physick is given, the greater danger of the disease. God would not have exercised *Paul*, thus above his strength, but that he might see his own feebleness and infirmity, and might accordingly trust in God only. Lighter and lesser afflictions do not drive thee out of all humane props; thou hast some creature-consideration or other, that doth make thee bear up thy heart; but when God cuts every rope, and drives the ship into the midst of the Sea, among waves and tempests, then thou art provoked to look up unto God. Let then the children of God lay to heart this sinne more, and examine themselves in every affliction that doth befall them. Thou many times sayest, Oh that I could find out the sinne, the *Jonah* that hath raised this tempest! Oh that I knew what was the peculiar corruption God would bring me in mind of by this trouble upon me! Why, try and search, whether thou hast not secretly trusted in thy own self, or in some earthly hopes? Whether thy heart hath been weaned from all things? It may be there is this or that creature thou doest inordinately lean upon, and therefore because thou doest not yet trust in God with all thy heart, he doth thus imbitter thy condition to thee. Inasmuch that were the children of God in no danger of self-dependance or creature-dependance, they should seldome meet with the rod of God upon their backs. Who was a man of greater afflictions and exercises than *David* was? And who speaketh more of trusting in God than he doth? This he learned by all his temptations.

Of the sinfulness of self-confidence, which appears 1. From Gods chastising his children so much to prevent it.

Secondly, This sinne is to be aggravated, *Because it is such a secret, close imbred sinne, it is the last sinne that will be mortified.* There is a difficulty of finding it out, and a difficulty of overcoming it, when it is discovered, and both these make it the more dangerous and damnable sinne. It is difficult to find it out: This sinne like *Saul* hideth it self behind the stuff; you may search and search, as they did for the *Spies* in *Rahab's* house; but because something or other covereth this sinne, therefore you passe it by undiscerned. How apt are we to say, I do not trust in my graces, I do not trust in my gifts? Would you not have me to take notice of them? How can I then be thankfull to God? How can I bless God for them? And for my graces, Do not all Divines say, though they may not trust in them, yet they may take them as comfortable signs of Gods favour, and thereupon rejoyce before God, yea and plead them against the accusation of Satan, or as an argument to God, not by way of merit, but because of the gracious promise made by God to our graces after this manner? *Hezekiah* under the sentence of death prayed, *Remember, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with an upright heart,* 2 King. 20. 3. Thus also *Paul* did, *I have fought a good fight, henceforth is laid up for me a crown of glory,* 2 Tim. 4. 7. All this is true, godly men are allowed to take comfort from their graces, and thankfully to receive the evidences of Gods love thereby; but how hard a matter is it to stay there, and go no further? How difficultly are consolations from them, and confidence in them, separated one from another? Even as to have riches, and not to trust in riches; so to have grace, and not trust in grace; and the rather, by how much grace is accounted a more excellent thing than wealth. As it is hard to find it out, so no lesse difficult to overcome it. *Cesar* had some enemies, of whom he said it was, *Difficilius invenire, quam vincere;* but it is not so with this corruption. *Paul* himself cannot so quickly shake off this viper that sticketh not to his hand, but close to the heart. For as faith is therefore the most difficult grace, because it carrieth us out of our selves, out of the creatures, out of all things, and fixeth the heart upon God alone; so on the contrary, this is the sinne that is most easie, and whereunto we are most propense; with the worme we crawl upon the ground; our feebleness and infirmity is such, that we must have crutches to rest upon;

2. It is a secret sinne.



and till faith be made perfect, we cannot but catch hold upon some reed or other, though never so weak.

3. 'Tis a sinne soon committed.

Thirdly, It being an heart-sinne, *It may be frequently committed in a day, in an hour.* Thy heart is alwayes in motion, it never lieth still; now every time it moveth, it may put forth some carnal dependance or other upon the creature. Thus whereas many sins cannot be often committed, there are many things concurrent ere they can be accomplished. This may be committed as often as there is the twinkling of the eye. The air then may not be fuller of Atomes, or the sea of water, than thy heart of carnal confidences. And certainly every time God is not made thy refuge, every time thou doest not rest under his shadow, so often doest thou put trust in something else than God onely. Take heed then of that sinne, which like the Poets *Hydra*, as often as thou cuttest off their Heads, new ones arise again in the room thereof. That the emptying of thy heart, is like emptying of a lively and quick spring; the more water is cast out, the more new cometh in immediately.

4. 'Tis a making the creature a God.

Fourthly, This trusting in any thing but God, is a very great sinne; *Because it is a making of the creature a God, and so a breach of that first Commandment, wherein we are forbidden to have any other gods, but the true one.* Now how great a sinne Idolatry is, the Scripture doth every where speak. Thou therefore that abhorrest to worship a stock, or a stone, who darest not fall down before an Idol to doe reverence thereunto: How often doest thou as bad in thy heart to the creatures? Yea many times some Idolaters did worship the true God, they did not erre in the object; onely they formed sinfull representations of God to themselves. As the *Israelites* in that Calf which they made, crying out, *These are thy gods, O Israel.* And this Idolatry is not so bad, as when that which is not the true God, is set up for him, and so worshipped. Now to trust in our selves, or creatures, is to erre in the object, we set up another thing in Gods roome; Thy parts are thy God; thy graces, thy Christ; thy repentance, thy Saviour, thou givest that to thy tears, which alone doth belong to the blood of Christ. If then God doth so often proclaime his jealousie in worshipping of other gods, will he not also about trusting in any thing but himselfe? What are the duties of the first Command, but to love God, to trust in him, and to depend upon him; for he onely is the proper and adequate object of trust, because in him is infallible verity and truth. Truth of being, so that he can never die, but be alwayes the same, and truth of promise, so that Heaven and Earth shall sooner passe away than his Word. Againe, he is willing and ready to help, he manifesteth his freeness of grace to thee, whereas the Devils and the damned they cannot trust in God, because they have no promise from God; yea they are sure he will never help them. Lastly, God is omnipotent, nothing is impossible to him. Therefore if thou canst meet with a creature that is eternal, unchangeable, omnipotent, then mayest thou put trust in that; but the whole world respectively to God, is lesse than the dust of the balance, which doth not turne the scale one way or other: so neither is all the power, and all the wisdom of the world able to turn thy condition, to supply thy wants, if God doth not interpose.

5. 'Tis a foolish and unprofitable sin.

Lastly, *It is a foolish and unprofitable sinne; as Jer. 17. Cursed is he that trusteth in man.* God delighteth to blast all the things thou hast hoped in; so that commonly we may know what we trusted too much in, by Gods removing of it; or what we would rest upon too much, by denying us such helps and comforts. No sooner have we with *Jonah* got under a gourd to keep our selves from the scorching heat, but God causeth a worm to devour it: how unwise art thou then by resting thy soul upon any comfort? Thou canst not take a more speedy way then



then to make God break it under thy arms. Even as the *Egyptians*, because they boasted of the waters of *Nile*, and trusted in them; God turned them all into blood. Be sure God will make thy confidences, thy sorrows and breakings of heart, that can never enough be received, which *Jonah* preached from his own experience, *They that observe lying vanities, forsake their own mercy*, *Jonah* 2. 8. Those very mercies God had purposed for thee, and was in the way of performing of them, by observing of, and trusting in other means and helps, thou hast utterly deprived thy self of. Even as God did with the *Israelites*, *Jerem.* 2. 37. *Thou shalt goe from Egypt with thine hands upon thy head, for the Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them.* Thus thou art many times bewailing the losse of thy confidences.



## SERM. LXXI.

### *Of the Nature, Object and Matter of our Divine Trust, or Dependance upon God.*

2 COR. I. 9.  
But in God.

**W**E now come to that blessed and medicinal effect of the great trouble which came upon *Paul* in *Asia*, as it is positively described. For we have the sinfull and unlawfull object of our trust removed (which is *our selves*,) and the proper adequate, and only object thereof asserted, and that is *the Lord*. From whence observe,

*That God alone is the proper object in whom we are to trust.*

God alone is the proper object of our trust.

As we are not to believe in any but the omnipotent God; so neither to trust in any besides him.

Because this Text is so proper, I shall enlarge my self about this great duty of trusting in God, it being of such great practical concernment. For there is no grace more difficultly and rarely exercised than this. There is indeed much presumption in the world, and carnal confidence, but little spiritual dependance upon God alone, and relying upon his promise and power, overlooking all means and instruments. That therefore we may be fully acquainted with the nature of this grace, and may accordingly exercise it all the day long; for every moment, every time we breathe, we have need of trusting in God.

Propositions concerning our trusting in God.

Let us lay down several Propositions. And

First, *Consider, that to trust in God is a gracious gift wrought in us by his Spirit.* No man is able of himself, or by himself to rest upon God alone, not regarding or looking above all second causes, unless he be enabled thereunto by God. For to trust is an act of faith, as is to be shewed: and faith that is in many places made to be the gift of God, and not accomplished by our strength. Whereas then you have many people, whose mouths are full of trusting in God,

1. It is wrought by the Spirit of God.



you must know, that such speak they know not what. For none can trust in God, but he that is enabled thereunto by the grace of God. For as *Peter's* body could not walk upon the waters without sinking, because of the natural weight of the body, unlesse Christ had in a wonderfull manner supported it. So neither can a man look higher than means, than instruments, unlesse the Spirit of God lift thy soul up. Yea, because man is so apt to live by sense, consisting of a sensible body, and therefore the things of sense most affect him; Hence it is, that if there be more difficulty to work one grace than another, because of the more immediate opposition of the soul against some duty more than another; We may say, that a man is sooner brought to be just, liberal, and to performe the duties of the second Table, yea many duties of the first Table, than this. No wonder then it be made a gracious gift of God. Hence

2. None but the regenerate can act this grace.

In the second place, *There is none can trust in God, but such as are regenerate, and are made new creatures.* For as none have true saving faith but such, so none have spiritual and heavenly dependance upon God but such. It is an easie matter to say, We trust in God, when we have the helps and supply of all creatures; but when all props are removed, then to rest on God, as securely and quietly, as if thou hadst all external abundance; this cannot be done but by a gracious heart. Therefore the unregenerate man, he doth but delude himself. It is not God that he trusteth in, but his wealth, his power, some refuge or other he hath in the creature; neither can he live upon higher principles. Hence we have that place thrice mentioned, *The just shall live by faith.* Faith is trusting there; and it is applied both to our life, in respect of temporal things, in afflictions, as *Heb. 10. 38.* as also in respect of spiritual things, especially our justification in the sight of God, as *Gal. 3. 11.* It is the just man then, and the sanctified man alone, who can live by trusting on God only. Sinne is such an heavy load, that it presseth down, and maketh a man creep upon the ground. Now all those creatures that did so, were unclean by the Law of God.

3. It is an act of faith.

Thirdly, *This trusting, it is an act of faith; by that grace we are able to depend upon God alone.* Indeed the Papists they make *trusting* to be an act of Hope: And it may not be denied, but that faith hath some such proportionable act flowing from it; but the trusting that the Scripture speaks so much of, is plainly an act of faith. For what the Old Testament calleth *Trusting in God* so often, in the New it is, *Believing on God, and on Christ*, *πιστευειν εις Θεον, & εις Χριστον*, is no more than fiducial recumbency, or resting of the soule upon Christ. Though hope therefore hath its trust, yet faith likewise hath its trust: Onely hopes object is apprehended as future, and in expectation; but faiths trusting maketh the object present, as to apprehension: And therefore *Heb. 11. 1.* it is called, *The substance of things hoped for.* By trusting then on God, we mean not that act of faith, whereby it knoweth God, nor that whereby it giveth assent, that there is a God; but whereby the whole heart is drawne out to depend on God, and rest upon him, for whatsoever good thing he standeth in need of. And therefore this trusting in God is necessarily accompanied with a love of God, and endeared thoughts about him, as a gracious Father, who will mercifully provide for all our wants. As *Austin* of old, *Credere in Deum, was Credendo amare.* So that here is a great difference between that Historical and Dogmatical faith which many Christians have, whereby they acknowledge the truths of Christ, and this fiducial trusting on God; for this is necessarily accompanied with an hearty love of, and delight in God, and cannot be separated from it. Hence the Devil that he may tempt to despair, which is a sinne opposite to trust in God, he labours to keep the distressed sinner in hard thoughts of God, as one who is a provo-



provoked Judge, and will not shew mercy. So that as long as the heart is by these sad temptations kept at a distance, and is estranged from God, it cannot so fully trust in him.

Fourthly, *It's not God absolutely considered that is the object of our trusting in him.* For the Devils and damned in hell, though none need mercy and help more than they doe, yet they cannot trust in him. Therefore God *relatively* considered, as revealing himself to his people, is the object of their hope, and these Attributes or Properties do especially sustain our trusting in him.

1. That he is the *infinite, true and ever living God.* Upon this ground to trust in Idols, to trust in riches, to trust in men, though never so great, is forbidden, not only as a sin, but as a vain thing; uncertain riches they are, Idols are vanities, they are nothing. Man hath his breath in his nostrils; and therefore it is foolish to trust in such things; but God being the *Jehovah*, and *Eternal*, even the *Everlasting God*, the *same for ever*; therefore it is that he onely must be trusted in. Are thy creatures a *Jehovah*? Have they an infinite being? Are they from everlasting to everlasting? No certainly; then it is Idolatry to put trust in them.

2. God is the Adequate Object of our hope, *Because of his Immutability on his Promises, as well as in his Being.* Here are two particulars included in this.

1. A *Promise.* For if God had not revealed to us, what he would doe for us, there could not be any trusting in him. Hence Gods promise, and mans trusting, they must alwayes go together. To trust for such things he hath never promised, is presumption, and a temptation of God; and not to trust for such things as he hath promised, though they seem never so improbable or impossible to us, is to limit God, and to measure him according to our apprehensions. This is to make trusting an act of sense or of reason; not of faith. The Rule then of our trusting is Gods promise. It is not Gods Infinitenesse and Eternity as such, but we must also have a promise. Therefore though God be so full of Goodnesse and Mercy, yet the damned cannot trust in him, because they have no promise from God, that he will doe good to them. But though we have a promise, yet if it were the promise of a man, who is a liar, who is inconstant and mutable, ready to repent of what he hath promised, then our trusting would be weak and uncomfortable; but God is unchangeable in his promise, *Heaven and Earth shall sooner passe away*, than this gracious word of God. *James 1. 17. With him there is no variableness, nor shadow of change.* God then being the supreme verity, and it being impossible for him to lie, as *Hebr. 6. 18, 19.* No wonder that our hope and trusting in God under all waves of temptations, be a *sure and stedfast Anchor*, as the Apostle calleth it. Why then is it, that you see even the people of God tossed up and downe with such uncertain thoughts and workings of heart? Why is it they have not a serene and quiet frame of heart all the day long? It is because they let goe this Anchor; They intermit this trusting in God; otherwise because God is the same, and his promise is the same, they also would be the same. You see then, why God is the Adequate Object of our trust, because he hath promised, and because he is unchangeable in his promise. What folly is it to trust in any earthly greatnesse and power? It is but as the shadow that passeth away. The Apostle calleth it, *The fashion of the world*, *1 Corinth. 7.* because it is so transitory. Therefore our name we customarily use to expresse things by, is most absurd and improper, if we regard Scripture-expression. For we use to say, A Kingly State, A Christian State; and so *Stati*, *Magnatum*; *Status* is à *stando*, and denoteth what

4. It is not God as absolutely, but relatively considered, that is the object of our trust.

1. As he is an infinite true and everlasting God.

2. As immutable in his promises.



what is stable ; whereas all these are but a *Fashion*, a *Shew* that passeth away. Thus when we would expresse the glory of a man, we say, he appeared in *Great State*. Now no word is so improper as that ; it is as if you should call a shadow a substance, or say, the substance of a shadow ; or as if running should be called standing still. The Scripture expresseth it more fully, when *Act. 25. 23. Agrippa and Bernice* are said to appear *μεγαλὴν καὶ πολλὴν πανουργίαν*, *With great pomp*, we translate ; in the original it is, *With a great phantasie or apparition*. The word *φαντασμα* is applied in Scripture to *apparitions of Spirits*, which quickly vanish away. Now how contradictory is it to call a phantasie a State, as if we should call a feather which flieth up and down, a mountain that abideth, and cannot be removed ? Seeing therefore all earthly greatnesse is thus fluid and ambulatory, how can we put any trust therein ?

3. As he is omnipotent.

Lastly, Therefore is God the ground of our trusting, *Because he is onely Almighty and Omnipotent, able to doe of himself whatsoever he hath promised*. For though we had Gods promise to doe such things for us, yet if he had not the supream power to order and worke all things when he pleaseth, but were subordinate to some higher power, then we could not trust in him. Hence we justly charge the Papists with Idolatry for trusting in the Virgin *Mary*, whom they call their hope in prayer, as also in the other Saints. For although they would elude by a distinction of trusting in one, as the primary efficient cause, and in one as a secondary and instrumental cause, in which latter sense they onely trust in the Saints, as they would perswade us ; yet that is against the very nature of divine trust, which must have for its object onely, that which is supream and omnipotent. So that unlesse they will distinguish of a primary God, and a secondary God, they cannot so distinguish about trusting in the same manner. Even as it is with the other act of faith, as it giveth a divine assent to any truth. The Schoolmen generally say, That the *Ratio formalis fidei*, is, *Revelatio Divina*, and *Suprema veritas*. So that we cannot with a Divine Faith believe upon any thing, but a Divine Testimony. Thus it is in this other act of faith, which we call trusting. It must be a Divine Promise, a Divine Power, else we cannot put this holy and divine trust in it. As therefore the *Psalmist* said, *Some put their trust in their horses, some in chariots, but we will trust in the Name of the Lord, Psal. 20. 7.* Thus let us ; Some trust in Angels, some in Saints, some in great men, in wise men ; but we will trust in the Lord. From hence also it is, that we do clearly confute the *Socinian*, who denieth the Eternal Deity of Christ. For if Christ were not God, if he were onely the best of creatures, yet as a creature, it would be unlawfull to trust in him, we should be guilty of great Idolatry to put confidence in him. Now it is plainly a duty to trust in Christ, as well as in God the Father, *Romans 15. 12. Though the root of Jesse, yet in him shall the Gentiles trust ; and that is, because he is not a meer man, but God as well as man. Ephesians 1. 12. So they are called, The first fruits of Achaia, who first trusted in Christ.* This then is a plain demonstration of the Godhead of Christ, because it is our duty to trust in him. You see by all these glorious properties in God, which are the full reason of our trusting in him, that it is not lawfull under any nice and subtil distinctions whatsoever to put our trust any where, but in the Lord.

2. The matter for which we trust in God is the good thing we want, either spiritual or temporal.

Secondly, As God is the object in whom we trust, So the matter for which we are to trust in him, is all the good things we want. There is not any one mercy, whether for soul or body, but we are to trust in God alone for it.

Now



Now the good things we want, empty themselves in two streames, *The spiritual mercies, and the temporal mercies*; and we are to trust in God for all these. There is not a crumme of bread, or a drop of drinke, but we are to trust and depend on God for it. We are not to trust in our labour, in our barne and store, but are to lie in prayer at the throne of grace every day, as *Lazarus* did at *Dives* his gate, even for a crum of spiritual mercies; and they are of many sorts:

1. That which is the ultimate and last end of all grace and holinesse here, which is *Eternal Life*, and *Everlasting Glory*. The trusting in God for this, is that which should keep up our hearts in all the streights we are to meet with. *1 Corinth. 15. If we had hope onely in this life, saith the Apostle, we were of all men most miserable.* So *Titus 1. 2. and 3. 7.* there is the hope of eternal life. The trusting by faith, and by hope, are of so near union, that one may well be brought to confirme the other. Now let a Christian be frequently putting forth these vigorous trustings in Christ for everlasting glory, what heavenly, joyfull and undaunted resolutions will it work in him?

2. There are mercies that are the meanes to lead to this end, such as *Justification, and Sanctification of our natures, daily remission of sinnes, and a daily preservation in the state of grace, that we may never fall away.* For these things we are certainly to trust for at Gods hand. We have Gods promise for these things, and who dare question, whether God be thus able to keep us to salvation or no? Thus remission of sinne is by faith in his blood, *Rom. 3.* Yea the life of a godly man, as to his spirituals and supernaturals, is wholly in this trusting. Thus the just (you heard) liveth by his faith. And *Paul* professeth aloud, *That the life he did live, (Galat. 2. 20.) though in the flesh, was by faith in the Sonne of God.* Oh that this spiritual truth were received and digested more by the godly! Doe you not look more into your selves, then up to God? Doe you not more live in the thoughts of your owne graces, than of Gods promises? Truly the right improving of this Doctrine about trusting in God, it would be like *Solomon's North-winde*, to blow away the rain, to dispell all sinfull sorrow.





## SERM. LXXII.

*What is required in our trusting in God, ex parte subjecti. And of the excellency of this grace.*

2 COR. 1. 9.

*But in the Lord.*

What is required to our trusting in the Lord.

1. A powerfull apprehension of our own and the creatures inability to help us.

**W**E are treating of this choice and necessary duty of *trusting in God*, and severall things have been spoken to acquaint us with the nature thereof; we proceed therefore, and as we have told you what is required *ex parte objecti*, to cause this *trusting in the Lord*; from the next place let us declare what is *ex parte objecti*, necessary to this duty. And for the explicating of that, there are these things concurrent to our trusting in the Lord.

1. *There must be a serious and powerfull apprehension of our own inability, yea, and of the weakness of all Creatures to help us, or to do good to us; for till this foundation be laid, that all power, wisdom, righteousness, and whatsoever the Creature can afford, is but a shadow, a reed, that can do no good at all, it is impossible that we should trust in the Lord. So that by this we may see the difficulty and rarity of this grace, for how hard a matter is it thus to be affected about all the means that are in the world, about all the Creatures we do enjoy, to look upon them but as those Instruments of Musick, which cannot sound any longer then they are blown into? How difficult to possess our soules with this principle? to look upon thy self and all Creatures, no otherwise then the poore creple that lay by the Poole side, that could not at all help or move it self? That do behold all things as Sarahs dead wombe, or Ezechiels dry bones, unless the Lord quicken and give life? You may see this practised by the Church of Israel, when she had smarted for her carnall confidence and dependance on outward helps, so as to neglect God; see in what an humble gracious manner she maketh her confession to God, Hos. 14. 3. *Asshur shall not save us, we will not ride upon horses, neither will we say any more to the workes of our hands, ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.* Oh blessed and self-emptied frame! here the Church repenting and turning unto God, of all the sinnes which she was guilty of, doth instance in her carnall confidence, as that which had most provoked God, and therefore she doth renounce and disavow all *civill confidence and trusting; Asshur shall not save us, &c.* And 2. *All religious confidence.* They will no more make their applications to their gods; and then here is the reason, because in thee the fatherless finds mercy. By this proclaiming, that they looked upon themselves, as so many poore fatherless Children, that had not wherewith to help themselves. If then an whole Nation do thus, how much more ought every particular Christian, though great, though rich, yet respectively to God, to look*



look upon himself, even as that Infant the Prophet speaketh of, *New borne and exposed to danger, and no wayes able to succor it selfe.* Thus he that would truit in God, must begin here and lay his foundation thus low, even as the Apostle saith, *1 Tim. 5. 5. She that is a widdow indeed and desolate, trusteth in God.* We cannot come to rest upon God, till we look upon our selves as desolate and destitute of all humane succour. The *Bohemians* when they lost their famous Captain *Zisca*, called themselves *Orphanes*. Thus when our helps, our outward supports are removed, then we are driven to look up unto God, and not before. The *Heathens* had a custome when they went into their Temples to pray, that none would go in with a Sword, or money in their Purse; which was to denote that they did not put confidence either in strength or wealth, but did rest upon their gods for relief only. We then that are Christians, who have the Word of God to be a guide unto us, ought to have low thoughts of our selves, and of all Creatures, accounting of them as nothing respectively unto God.

2. To trust in God is required in the next place a *practicall Meditation concerning the greatness and goodness of God*, how infinitely able he is, and how willing to help his people. It is the not attending to this, but the looking unto the power and strength of second causes, that maketh us so full of distrust in God. Is it not then for this reason, that the Scripture doth so often delight to represent the greatness and majesty of God, *That all the Nations are but as a drop to him; that they are less then nothing; that he created the world out of nothing?* All this is to raise up the heart, that it should have high and hopefull thoughts about God. This maketh *David* attribute so many metaphoricall titles to God, that he is *his strength, his rock, his fortresse and strong tower.* Did we meditate upon these things; did we with *Abraham* not consider the dead wombe, but the power of God, with what dependence on God, and quietness of mind should we pass our lives? But now we are tossed up and down with many waves; we are like *Noah's Raven* sent out of the Ark, we know not where to set our feet; and all is, because we do not settle on God; *omnis motus fit super immobili.* The soul cannot move unless it have a stedfast and immoveable foundation to stand upon, and that is not the Creature, but God only. Thus *David Psal. 16. 8. I have set the Lord alwayes before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved;* and therefore Verse 2. expressing this act of trusting in God, he saith, *thou art my Lord Adonai.* The word signifieth that which is the *basis, the foundation* that keepeth up all things. Oh then let nothing be great in thy thoughts but God: *Grotius Prologom. in Epist. ad Rom.* would make that faith, which the Apostle doth so much commend in his Epistle to the *Romanes*, to be nothing but an high and eminent esteem of Gods power, &c. So that faith in this respect, and not the obedience of Christ as apprehended by faith, is by him that imputed righteousness, *Paul* doth so much instance in; But he is deceived therein, and layeth this as a foundation for his other errors about *Justification*. Though we do easily grant that in faith, there is a most raised and elevated apprehension about the majesty, and power of God.

2. A practicall consideration of Gods greatness and goodness.

3. To trust in God there is required a *peculiar and particular appropriation of God to our soules, as our God, as our Father;* to say as *Thomas* to Christ, *my God, and my Lord.* Thus *David* in the forementioned *Psal. 16. 2.* when he had pressed God with this Argument to preserve him, *because he trusted in him,* he declareth what his trusting is. *Oh my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord.* Thus we are particularly to apply and to say, *Thou art my Father, thou art my God.* And this is the reason why the people of God are so full of distrust, of despondent and dejecting feares. They cannot say, *Oh my soul, thou hast said to God, thou art my Lord;* yea

3. A particular appropriation of God, as our God.



we look upon him as a judge that will condemne.

4. An experimentall knowledge of Gods promises and providences.

4. To trust in God there is required *some experimentall knowledge of God*, to be acquainted with his former works of mercy and deliverance to them; for when we have both Gods promise and his providence seconding it; this maketh us to have more vigorous trusting in God, as *David* argued; God had delivered him from the Bear and Lion; and therefore would from the *Philistin*. Thus the Apostle at the 10. Verse from the present deliverance doth argue, that *he trusteth he will deliver also*. Thus *Psal. 9. 10. They that know thy name will trust in thee*. It is for want of experience and practicall knowledge about God that maketh us so full of diffidence.

5. An use of meanes.

5. To trust in God, there is required *a faithfull and diligent use of all those meanes that God hath required*; and by this it is fully distinguished from presumption, which many take to be in their *trusting in God*: for when you hear such who live impenitently in evill and ungodly wayes, yet say they trust in Christ with all their heart for the pardon of their sinnes; they do desperately presume, for if they did trust in God, they would be constant in the use of those meanes God hath required, 1 *John 3. 3. He that hath this hope in him, purifieth himselfe as God is pure*. Its not their trusting in God, but presumption, which maketh thee expect such glorious priviledges, and dost not walk in the way thereunto.

6. A sound judgement.

6. To trust in God, there is required *a sound judgement, and right understanding*, especially when we speake of spirituall mercies, such as justification, and reconciliation with God. *Agid. Coninck. de arteb. supernat. de spe.* a Popish Writer maketh a threefold hope, or trusting in God. One he calleth *Pelagian*, and that is when we rest upon God only because of our own merits, and our own strength; and this he doth reject, as well he may, for this is not to trust in God, but in our selves. A second hope he calleth *Lutheran*, and that is when he trusteth only in the grace of God, excluding all merits; this also he rejects, and thereby also the only hope the Scripture commends to us. The third hope he calls the *Catholick trusting in God*, and that is partly upon the grace of God, and partly upon our own merits, yet wrought also by the grace of God. But to think of merits, or to speak of merits, when we come into the presence of so great and holy a God, whose Law we break daily, and in all our best duties faile exceedingly, is to play the *Pharisee* and not the *Publican*, who yet only was accepted with God. The second way of *trusting* therefore, viz. *only in the grace of God*, excluding all our own strength, is that which is approved of by the Word of God; So that till we be sound in our judgement about this Point, we cannot rightly trust in God.

Of the excellency of this grace of trusting in God.

In the next place a second main particular to cleare the Doctrine about this trusting, is to consider the *excellency of their grace*, that so we may thereby be the more exercised therein. For

1. It is many times put for the whole worship of God.

1. *It is many times put for the whole worship of God*, because he that doth trust in God, he will be sure to performe all those other duties God doth require. Thus *Psal. 115. 9, 10.* when the house of *Israel* and *Aaron* are exhorted to *trust in the Lord*; by that is meant the *whole worship of God*, even as to fear God is sometimes also put for the whole service of God. The excellency and dignity of the grace appeareth herein.

2. The Lord delighteth to put us upon the daily practice of it.

2. It is therefore excellent, because *the Lord so delighteth to put us upon the daily practice of it*. Insomuch that whatsoever he doth for his people either in spirituall or temporall mercies, they do obtaine it wholly by trusting. What is that great way, whereby we are justified before God, how come we to obtain this blessed priviledge? It is only by *faith*. And what is this faith, but a trusting and resting upon Christ alone? So that the most noble and essentiall consideration in justifying faith, is that it doth make the soul rest and depend on



on the Lord Jeſus. God would not juſtifie us by any other way, by working, by doing, but by truſting; which doth greatly demonſtrate the acceptableneſs of this grace to God. So alſo for temporall mercies, that aſſertion twice or thrice uſed; *The juſt ſhall live by faith*, doth in part relate to thoſe temporall promiſes, which God maketh for the preſervation and ſupport of his people; and now God will have theſe performed to ſuch who wait on him, who truſt on him. It is not *the juſt ſhall live by love, by repentance*, but *by faith*; God therefore would have us wholly depend upon him for every mercy we have; hence we are commanded to pray for *our daily bread*: truſt not in thy ſtore or treaſure; truſt not in thy labour and ſkill, but be every day at the Throne of grace, begging for every mercy thou deſireſt. Oh but what diſhonour is there to God in this reſpect? Doth not the rich man look more to his revennues then Gods promiſe. Doth not the Tradeſman look more to his cuſtome and his gaine then Gods power; yea the labouring man is apt to truſt in his health, and ſtrength, as if he needed not to depend upon God all the while he hath that; *Sanitas pauperis eſt patrimonium*; a poore mans health is his patrimony, his freehold, and he is apt to make it his god to truſt in. What excellency then is in this grace, when no mercy either ſpirituall or temporall can be obtained but by the exerciſe thereof. For the ſoul you muſt truſt God, and the mercies thereof; for the body you muſt truſt God, and the mercies thereof. And obſerve the deceitfullneſs of thy heart herein, who truſteth in Chriſt for thy juſtification and ſalvation, but art full of diſquieting cares and feares about thy externall preſervation and maintenance. Oh fooliſh and unwiſe! which is greater, ſalvation then rayment and food? and yet thou art perſwaded God will do the greater, but doubteth about the leſſer.

3. It is excellent becauſe it doth indeare God to us, and in a peculiar manner obligeth God to look to us. For when the ſoul can ſay, O Lord, I renounce all other helps; I truſt not in any other ſupport; I leave all things to adhere to thee; this doth in particular manner ingage God to look upon us as his own, and ſo to defend us. Thus David argueth *Pſal. 16. 1. Preſerve me O Lord, for I truſt in thee*, *Pſal. 7. 1. In thee (O Lord) I put my truſt ſave me*; ſo *1 Chron. 5. 20.* it is ſaid of the Sons of *Reuben*, when they were in great diſtreſs, yet the *Hagarites* were delivered into their hands, becauſe they did put their truſt in God. It is alſo attributed unto *Hezekiah*, as a great and glorious honour to him, *2 Kings 18. 5. That he truſted in the Lord God of Iſrael*, and *Verſe 7. The Lord was with him, and he prospered*. Therefore the committing of our ſelves into Gods hands, is a ſpeciall way to ſecure us.

4. The excellency of this grace is ſeen in the difficulty of it, and tranſcendency to fleſh and blood: for if *Ariſtotle* could ſay *homo was magis ſenſus, quam intellectus*, more ſenſe then underſtanding, putting forth the acts thereof more then of reaſon, we may ſay much rather he is more reaſon then faith. The difficulty of it maketh the People of God oftner in diſtracting feares and carking cares then in any other ſinnes. David who profeſſeth his truſt in God, yet how often tempted to diſſidence? *Aſa* a good man *2 Chron. 16. 12.* is blamed that in his diſeaſe he ſought not to God, but to the *Physicians*. It was lawfull for him to ſeek to them, but becauſe he reſted wholly on them, and not on God, therefore is he thus taken notice of: ſeeing then its our duty to uſe meanes and not to expect that God will in a miraculous and immediate manner work all things for us: Hence is the great difficulty in this matter, ſo to uſe them, as not to put confidence in them. Alas all the Creatures, all the ſecond cauſes by their own power without Gods bleſſing, could do us no good; our cloathes would not warme us; our food nourish us, unleſs God command it. Hence our Saviour ſaith, *Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word proceeding out of Gods mouth. Matth. 4. 4.* It is not then the Creatures; it is not the conditions and rela-

3. It indeareth God to us, and engageth him for us.

4. Tis difficult to fleſh and blood.



tions we are in, that do support us, but God only. Again the difficulty is seen in trusting of God, because Gods promise and his providences seem to go contrary to one another. The godly have the promises of this life, health, wealth: Peace is promised to them, and yet how often exercised with the contrary; and this maketh trusting in God the more difficult. So that what inevidence is, in respect of faith assenting, the same arduity and improbability, yea appearing impossibility is in respect of faith trusting. In all believing there is an inevidence, not in respect of the testimony, as the *Papists* dreame; and therefore would have faith defined by ignorance, rather then by knowledge; but in respect of the thing it self. We do not apprehend the things of faith by reason, as we do naturall truth; and this maketh faith, as it is assenting, to be so difficult; and no less is it in faith, as trusting, for the difficulty and improbability, which appeareth in the things hoped for, so much is contrary to flesh and blood; that we deny sense and reason many times when we put forth faith.

5. One of Gods ends in afflicting us is to work this grace.

\*5. The excellency of this grace is seen, in that *God doth on purpose in much mercy afflict us, keep us low, remove all our props from us, that so we may learne to depend on him*; for this end we are afflicted, for this end God maketh widowes and fatherless, and brings us into a Wilderness that we may live on him only.

6. It giveth all glory to God.

6. This excellency of it is manifested only in that *it giveth all glory to God, debaseth man, maketh all the greatness of the world to be no more then a reede or a feather*. And no wonder then, if God so much encourage this grace of trusting in him; for we cannot glorifie God more and debase our selves. Therefore he will have us justified by trusting in him; therefore he will have us in all temporals look up to him only, because then God is alwayes in our thoughts; we look above men as *Jacob*, above the rounds of the Ladder to the upper end where God was.

7. It calmes and quiets the spirit.

7. This is excellent *because of the blessed effect it hath, causing all tranquillity and quietnesse of spirit*. Where this grace is vigorously put forth, there are no sad complaints, no unruly passions and discontents; but like the strong man, it keepeth the house quiet and at peace: for this excellent effect thereof it is, that the Devill doth so much oppose it, raise seeming objections against it, because he would bring the people of God into an Hell here, seeing he cannot do it hereafter.



SERM. LXXIII.

*Of the Expression, God who raiseth the dead, how it is to be understood, and what it implies.*

2 COR. I. 9.

*Which raiseth the dead.*

**T**His last clause is added, as a reason, why we are not to trust in our selves, but in God; he can do that, which no King, no Emperour, no Sovereign power in the world can do, he can *raise from the dead*. By this instance the Apostle discovereth Gods omnipotency; for none but an infinite power can do this; even as an infinite power is required to create, to make something out of nothing. Therefore the Philosopher speaking according to the ordinary way of nature, saith *ex nihilo nihil fit*. Thus it is also in regard of raising the dead, nothing but an infinite power can do this, because there is another rule in Philosophy, *A privatione ad habitum non datur regressus*. We read indeed of *Elishah* raising the dead Child, and so the Apostles were enabled to work this miracle, but they did these things not *authoritative* but *adprecativè*, not by way of *authority* but *prayer*. Christ wrought these miracles at their prayer to him, and therefore they are said to do these things *in his name*. He only then who hath an infinite power can raise the dead. Neither doth the Apostle say, *who can*, but *who doth raise*, signifying not only Gods power, but his will and readiness; and then in the present tense, denoting, God doth this daily and continually to his people. Now when the Apostle describeth God thus as *raising the dead*, you must understand it of the dead *literally*. Those that are actually dead, or as good as dead, as to any humane power, which was the case of *Paul*; and also dead, *metaphorically*, viz. such who are in those outward calamities and streights, that they have no visible way to escape out of them. In this extent you must understand the expression; and from thence observe,

*That God is both able and willing to help and deliver his people in hopelesse and helpelesse troubles.*

God both can and will help his people in their extremities.

For by this expression *Paul* doth denote the utmost extremity; if God can and will do the greatest, how much more easie is it to him to do the less? Though nothing is hard to God, for he doth great things as easily as less things; so that this is brought in as unspeakeable comfort to the godly who are apt to say; This trouble is so great; this streight is so heavy, that I have no hope, my soul doth sink under it. Oh remember, it cannot be more desperate then to be a dead man, and yet God doth recover out of that condition: He doth not say, God that healeth the sick; God that comforteth those which are in darkness;



ness; God who raiseth up those that are cast down. Though in other places, these things are attributed to God, but *God who raiseth the dead*, which is far more then the former.

To prosecute this, let us consider wherein this Doctrine is true, both *literally*, and *metaphorically*; and then how much is comprehended in the expression. For the

1. God raiseth up the naturally dead.

1. This is true in the *naturall dead*, that God can, and doth raise up such to life again. In the New Testament we read of severall persons raised by Christ to life again, such a miracle and wonder, that unless in the Old Testament the like was never heard of in the world before; for they are but Fables what some *Heathens* may record to be done amongst them in this matter. Yea, at Christs Resurrection, it is said that many did rise again, and went into the holy City. Which maketh the Apostle *Heb. 11. 35.* instance in this as one of the great wonders wrought for the Saints, *That women received their dead raised to life again.* And truly this consideration of Gods power should wonderfully support us in all troubles, in all exigences; God can create, where there is nothing pre-existent; *I create peace*; and he can also restore and give a resurrection to those that are dead. Let us not then have low thoughts of the power of God, as if he were limited in his workes, as man is; but the demonstration of Gods power will be evidently and palpably manifested in that great and universall Resurrection of all that are dead, at the day of judgement. This work of God doth transcend all humane reason and power; therefore when *Paul* Preached this, they accounted him nothing but a *babler*. It is Disputed, whether the Resurrection of the dead can be proved possible by naturall reason; but whether it can or no, we are sure the Scripture doth so positively and plainly affirme it, that it must be bold *Atheisme* to deny it. Now do but consider how great a matter it is to exercise faith in this particular; how improbable, yea, and impossible doth it seem to naturall reason? All those who have dyed ever since *Adam*, so many thousand yeares ago, who have been for so long a time consumed into ashes; All such bodies which have been eaten with fish, or beasts; yet God will raise the same body again, the same bones and flesh again. What amazement and astonishment may this raise in thee? yet it is clear by Scripture, God can and will do this. Oh then that the godly did more vigorously exercise their faith in this fundamentall point of Religion. What, canst thou believe in God concerning this great and admirable truth? yet doubtst whether he can raise thee out of those petty and minute troubles thou art exercised with. When was news brought to the *Pope* of the murder of *Henry* the fourth of *France*, he was exceedingly affected with it in his speech, in the conclave blasphemously aggravating the mercie as he thought, and among other particulars said; the fact was so incredible, that had he not used himself to believe the high and mysterious points of Religion, he could not have believed this fact. Thus he in a wretched manner; but thou maist in a true and godly sense say, Oh Lord this temptation is so great, this trouble is so pressing, I am so greatly overwhelmed, that did I not believe those wonderfull Principles of Religion; were I not used all the day long to things above humane reason and expectation; I could not be able to beare up my self in these extremities.

2. God raiseth the metaphorically dead, and such who are in any trouble either externall or internall.

2. This Doctrine is *metaphorically* true, also God raiseth from the dead, and that again in a twofold extremity, *externall* and *internall*, *externall troubles*, the Scripture doth delight to represent the great and extreame troubles of the Church, when it hath visible help or deliverance, under the name of *death*, *Isaiah 26. 19.* We have the Prophet comforting the Church in her desolate estate. *Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.* It is true many Interpreters expound this, as if properly and immediately spoken of the Resurrection: and it should seem our Translators understood it so, when they render



render it (*together with my body,*) but the context maketh it cleare : God speaketh of their deliverance from captivity, wherein he calleth his people, *Cadaver meum, my dead body*, because in outward appearance so; now the reason of this may be, because Gods power would be to them, as the dew, to herbs ready to perish, which doth revive them. Thus their deliverance out of their calamity is described, *Hosea 6. 2. After two dayes he will revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.* This Text is literally and immediately to be understood of the *Jewes*, yet by consequence it may be applyed to Christ; so that it argueth the calumniating spirit of *Hunnins* who would make *Calvin* to jadaize because he doth not expound it as a promise of Christs Resurrection. God will do with his Church as he did with the body of Christ, he would not suffer it to see corruption, but within three dayes raise it again. Thus saith the Church, though we be in a dead condition, yet he will within two or three dayes, within a short time revive us again. But above all, you have a most evident allusion to this *Ezek. 37.* Where the Prophet in a vision saw a *Valley full of dry bones; and breath from the Lord brought sinews and flesh upon these bones, and the bones came together and lived.* Now what the meaning of this parabolically vision is, appeareth *Verse 11.* These bones are the whole house of *Israel*: Behold they say our bones are dried up, our hope is lost, we are cut off from all parts: but saith God, *I will open your Graves, and you shall come out.*

By these expressions you see how true the Doctrine is, that in the Churches extreame calamities, God raiseth the dead; neither was this opening of the graves, and making dry bones to live once, done by God only, for that people of that time: But such hath been the condition of the Church in severall Ages. It hath been the dry bones, and God hath breathed life into them. Now the Child of God should daily meditate upon these great workes of God to his People, and then he will be ashamed to see himselfe so much dejected about his own particular. What, thou art but one dry bone, and cannot God restore thee when he doth help so many? Can he deliver his whole Church, and not a particular Member therein? More faith in the generall affaires of the Church would facilitate thy particular.

Come we then to *internall extremities and exigences*, and there in a twofold sense, likewise we shall find it is God, that raiseth the dead.

In the first place, If you consider man in his *state by nature*, he is wholly dead in sinne; and therefore when God by his grace doth correct him, then he *raiseth the dead*. Thus every godly man, in this spirituall change wrought upon him, can experimentally say, *God who raiseth the dead.* I was senselesse in sinne; I was stupid; I felt no burden; I desired no deliverance, but God raised me from the dead. Even as the Father said of his Prodigall Sonne converted, *this our Sonne was dead, but is alive.* This expression in a spirituall sense the Scripture doth much delight in, *Ephes. 2. You who were dead in sinne, hath he quickned,* and therefore the work of grace is compared to a *Resurrection*: and from this similitude we justly urge against the *Arminians*, that man hath no active power to prepare himselfe for grace, or to turne himselfe to God; no more then a dead *Lazarus* did dispose himselfe to a Resurrection. Thou then who labourst under many temptations about the weaknesse of thy graces; that bewaile thy dead heart, thy dead duties, thy dead Religion; Oh thou art withered, and hast no life in thee: Remember it is God *that raiseth the dead.* And certainly if he did infuse the life of grace into thee at first, when thou wast wholly dead, can he not much more now thou art quickned, recover thee out of thy decayings and swoounding fits; he that hath

Of Gods raising from internall extremities.

spirituall



spirituall life at first, can much more recover thee out of thy consumptions; he that delivered from death, can much more from sickness.

2. There is another *internall exigency upon the soul*, which may be called a *spirituall death*, and that is the sad desolations and terrible blackness, that may cover the soul because of desertions; God may have forsaken thee; thou maist not only look upon thy selfe as a dead man, but as a damned man. Oh this temptation when God sets himselfe against a broken soul, shootes his arrowes into his heart; Though a bruised reed breaketh him more, though but a smoaking flax, yet ready to quench it; this (I say) is adjudged by those who labour under, it worse then death, more bitter then death. We have a remarkable instance for this, in *Heman*, *Psalme* 88. where *Verse* 14, 15, 16. he maketh bitter complaint under soul-terrors, *Why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me? While I suffer thy terrors I am distracted;* and *Verse* 3. he saith, *He was free from amongst the dead, as the slain that lye in the grave, Whom God remembreth no more.* Yea his temptation doth so overcloud him, that he seemeth to question the truth of our Doctrine, v. 10. *Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee?* This good man must needs be greatly dejected when he doubteth of this: for nothing is more ordinary with God, then to shew wonders to the dead; and therefore had he but possessed his heart with this truth, he had been able to walk on those waters, whereas now he is ready to sink: had he concluded, saying, Oh my soul, why art thou cast down within thee? what, though thou art dead, yet it is God that raiseth the dead; the dead have cause to praise him; this would have revived him. Yea God for the most part will not come in to help till we look upon our selves as dead: even as Christ did delay till *Lazarus* was dead and putrifying in the grave, that so his glorious power might be the more discovered in restoring of him to life. Indeed the *Psalmist* might have argued, that if God should quite forsake him, suffering him to be swallowed up in despaire; Do those that despaire, do they praise thee? Do the damned in Hell blesse and glorifie thy name? If then in these sad and bitter temptations upon thy soul, thou wouldst have some worke to get into, then remember this truth, *God raiseth the dead.*

What is implied in the expression God raiseth from the dead.  
1. That Gods own Children may be brought into helpless and hopeles conditions.

Thus we have heard in what particulars this Doctrine is true; let us now consider what is implied in this expression, *God raiseth the dead.* And

1. It supposeth *That Gods own Children may be brought into an helpelesse and hopelesse estate.* They may be in a *Wildernesse*, so that if God doth not extraordinarily provide Manna for them, they will perish; for you must know that this is attributed to God, chiefly for the godly mans sake. For though the wicked may sometimes be delivered from imminent dangers, yet that is by the generall providence of God, who doth in Heaven and Earth what he pleaseth; but the godly are delivered from the speciall love of God, and his peculiar promise to them, of being their God: So that it is in this case, as it is in the Resurrection, all men shall be raised from the dead, even the wicked as well as the just; only the wicked shall be raised by the power of God as a just judge; but the godly as Members of Christ, and from that speciall Covenant of grace God, made with them; and upon this foundation *Luke* 20. 37. doth Christ prove the Resurrection, because he *is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaack, and the God of Jacob.* These are mentioned rather then *Noah* or *Enoch*, when yet God was also their God, because to those the promise of grace was either at first made, or afterwards repeated. As therefore because God is a God in Covenant, he will raise up their dead bodies; so from this relation he will



will raise thee up from thy extreame necessities; yet this supposeth that God though he loveth us, so as to deliver from evill, yet he will not alwayes prevent the evill.

2. Here is implied, *That God hath an immediate sovereignty and dominion over all conditions and estates, be they never so bitter and hopelesse.* We cannot say of the true God, that he is the God of the Vallies, but not of the Hills also. When that Lord would not believe God could on a suddaine provide such incredible plenty, he was severely punished for it. The *Israelites* also are taken notice of for limiting God, *Psal. 78. 19.* Though God had given them water, yet say they, *Can he furnish a Table in the Wildernes?* Oh how often are we guilty of such distrust? though God hath done thus and thus, yet can he do this also? *But he raiseth the dead,* he hath a command over all things. Hence God is said *1 Cor. 1. 28.* *To choose things that are not, thereby to confound things that are.* So that there is no tentation, no affliction, but God can command it, and work what he pleaseth out of it for thy good; he can raise up Children to *Abraham* out of stones, he can make Grapes to grow of Thornes, and Figs of Thistles.

2. That God hath power over all estates whatsoever.

3. There is implied, *That our extremities are Gods opportunities,* They are the proper time to work in and not before: Why doth he not say, God that healeth the sick; that comforteth the sorrowfull; but instanceth in the utmost of all, that raiseth the dead, but to shew that it is commonly Gods way to delay his help till it be at the very outmost? Christ would not turne water into Wine, till all was spent. When the poor creeple that lay so long by the Poole side said, *I have no man to help me,* then Christ healed him. It became a Proverbe in the Church of old. *In the Mount the Lord will be seen.* God lets *Abraham* alone till he was lifting up his hand to give a mortall blow, and then God appeareth, providing also a Ram in *Isaacs* stead. Thus it was also with *Abraham*, God provideth him a Son out of a dead Wombe, that so his glory may be more exalted; commonly a godly mans *Isaacs*, his joyes and comforts are brought out of the dead Wombe of the Creatures. What more is to be said herein, will come in seasonably in the next Verse.

3. That our extremities are Gods opportunities.

Let us from the premisses make this Use, *Doth God raise even the dead,* and may such put trust in God? Then shame and reprove thy saying; oh me slow to believe! oh me dull and heavy about Heavenly duties! for though my afflictions are but weak and ordinary, there is nothing above measure or strength in them, yet I am ready to faint; how can this be forgiven to me? As the Apostle said in another case, *you have not yet resisted to blood.* So it may be thy exercises have never been so grievous and extreame, so as thou art to be accounted as a *dry bone*, as a dead man, and yet I have much ado to trust in God in these inferior tryals. Cry out unto the Lord to help thee in these weak graces, be ashamed when any little trouble is apt to disquiet thee, to discompose thee. Oh say if it were the worst condition that could come upon me, if it were the heaviest tryall that could fall on me, yet I was to trust in him who raiseth the dead.





## S E R M. LXXIV.

*We are not to consider Gods Mercies in general onely, but their several Aggravations also.*

2 C O R. I. 10.

*Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver : in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.*

**T**He Apostle having formerly discovered his humane feares and diffidence under that great trouble which came upon him in *Asa*, doth now recollect himself, and revive out of his swoonings. The Sunne that was in an Eclipse, doth now begin to shine forth in glorious lustre. He had informed us, that the end of that heavy tribulation was, That he should not trust in himself, but in God. And now in this verse, we see this blessed effect took place in him. For by the experience of Gods mercy to him at this time, he is encouraged to trust in God for the future; he hath, doth, and will deliver. One favour from God is a pledge of more to come.

In this verse then we see *Paul* got above, and conquering that weaknesse and imbecillity which he found in himself, and acknowledging the goodnesse of God, and his power to him, *Paul* found God able to raise the dead, by what he had done to him in his particular.

In the Text then we may take notice of,

1. *Paul's* solemn acknowledgement of the goodness and power of God to him in delivering of him. And

2. His *Encouragement* from thence to trust in God for the future.

In the former part we have his celebration of Gods goodnesse to him; and this he aggravateth from the hopelesnesse and desperatenesse of his estate, which he calleth a *Death*, not a sicknesse, but a death. Yea *Chrysostome* observeth, That he doth not say, *Who hath delivered us from such dangers*, but *such death*, to shew the extremity. *Chrysostome* reads it in the plural number θανάτων, *deaths*; but the general Copy is otherwise. Now *Paul* doth not onely call it *death*, but παντός θανάτου, *such death*. The word is used in the New Testament about three times, besides in this place; and it is alwayes applied to the great aggravation of a thing, so as we are to admire it, as if the like had never been heard of. Thus *Revel.* 16. 18. παντός & οσμού, *is such an Earthquake as never had been before*. *James Chap.* 3. 4. πλοία, *are ships very great*. And *Hebr.* 2. 3. *How shall we escape, if we neglect, παντός σωτηρίας, so great salvation?* then which there cannot be a greater. The Apostle therefore in using this word, doth intend to aggravate the goodnesse of God towards him, to leave out no circumstance that may not heighten



heighten the mercy. It is not enough with him to take notice of the mercy, but the aggravation of his mercy; and this maketh his heart seven times hotter (as it were) in praising of God, than otherwise it would be. From whence observe,

*That the children of God do not onely acknowledge the mercy of God to them, but they also consider of every circumstance that may make the mercy appear greater.*

The children of God do not only take notice of Gods mercies, but their aggravations likewise.

They will take up every crumme, and the fragments (as it were) that Gods miraculous power may be more demonstrated. They doe not content themselves with a beholding of the mercy in the bulke, but they weigh every particular ingredient, and so of one mercy make many mercies. That as the godly in their humiliation for sinne, thinke it not enough to humble themselves in the general, but they endeavour to bring to minde every circumstance that may aggravate it, and so make themselves more abominable and loathsome in their own eyes: Thus they do also in matter of thanksgiving; They doe not take the mercy in the grosse, but they looke through it, and about it to espie out every particular that may be like a coale of fire in their bosomes. Thus we have the thankfull Psalmist, Psal. 136. severing every particular mercy of God to Israel by it self, and then addeth, *For his mercy endureth for ever: Sihon King of the Amorites; for his mercy endureth for ever. Og King of Basan; for his mercy endureth for ever.* He reckoneth them up one, and by one, though he might have satisfied himself with that expression, *vers. 24. Who hath redeemed us from all our enemies:* But a gracious heart dare not rob God of his glory in any one benefit that he hath from him. For if he must say with Jacob, *He is lesse than the least of his mercies;* It is not for him to passe it by; for every little mercy is farre above his deserts; to him belongeth all the curses of the Law; whatsoever is not hell and damnation, cometh from the meer bounty of God.

But let us illustrate this truth in the particulars, shewing wherein the people of God use to make their aggravation. And

First, *The children of God use to enlarge their thoughts in praises of God, from the low, weak and impotent condition they of themselves were in.* Now the more the disease is found out to be desperate and incurable, the greater is the art and skill of the Physician. Thus Psal. 136. 23. *Who remembered us in our low estate.* The blackest Eclipse makes the Sunnes light, when recovering, more glorious. The lower and weaker in thy self, the more is God thereby acknowledged. So Psal. 34. 6. *This poor man cryed, and the Lord heard him.* This aggravateth the mercy of God, that though a very Lazar, yet God would not despise him. So Psal. 142. 3. *When my Spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path.* Nothing is more ordinary then such passages in the Psalmes to aggravate the goodnesse of God towards the godly from the lownesse, and the impotency they were in: Oh if God had not come in at that time, I had utterly perished! How many low conditions have many of Gods people been in, sometimes in respect of their outward, sometimes in respect of their inward? yet God hath delivered them from those whales bellies. Your affections to praise God, will be very cold and dull, till you possesse your soules with this thought. Oh how low was it with me! Little did others know how it fared with me, One step further would have cast me into utter horroir, and then when I could bear no longer, God supported me. Many Psalmes may the children of God make (as it were) I was in such a sad temptation; but God rescued me, *For his mercy endureth for ever;* I was in such an outward streight,

1. From their own low condition.



and the Lord made a way to escape, *For his mercy endureth for ever.* Thus the thoughts of thy low condition will greatly advance the help of God vouchsafed to thee.

2. From their own sinfulness

Secondly, *The people of God doe aggravate the mercy of God, not onely from the greatnesse of the danger they were in, but also their sinfulness, their unworthinesse, that ever God should cast an eye of pity on them; and this they doe whether in temporal or spiritual mercies.* And truly this is an excellent way to enlarge the heart in blessing of God; when we shall consider, how unworthy we are, we that deserved cursing, to meet with blessing. See this humble frame in *David*, 1 Chron. 17. 16. when *Nathan* came to declare the good purpose of God towards him, in raising up him and his posterity to glory; see how humbly, and in a self-empried manner he addressed himself to God, *Who am I, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* As if he should say, Oh Lord, what am I, and my family, the meanest, and most unworthy, and wilt thou doe this to me? Yea, as if this were a small thing, thou hast spoken of thy servants house, for a great while to come, and hast regarded me after the estate of a man of high degree: What can *David* speake more? Yea as it is 1 Sam. 7. he saith, *Is this the manner of men, O Lord God?* implying, that onely God vouchsafeth mercy to such as are unworthy. As then he, who would build high must lay a deep foundation: So he that would exalt God on high, must lay himselfe low. And if it be thus for temporal mercies, we are not worthy of a crumme of bread; and though with *Dives*, we should begg for a drop of water, it might be denied us: Then how much more in spiritual mercies, if God bestow them upon us, shall not our affections be greatly kindled in blessing of God? Take that fountain of all mercies, the giving of the Lord Christ to believers, to worke out their salvation, by being made a curse for them. How diligent is the Scripture to put an account (as it were) upon every passage therein? That it should be as impossible for a believer to thinke of this love of the Father to us, and not be ravished with it, as for a man to carry hot coales in his bosome, and they not burn him. For the Scripture aggravateth it from the Person who died for us, even *the onely begotten Sonne of God*, John 3. 16. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his onely begotten Sonne.* He so loved it; if God would have denied any thing to mankinde, it would have been this, who would not think that he should rather suffer all men to be damned, then to give up his Sonne to death? And yet what astonishing love is here? Dared a poor sinner of himself ever thought to have begged such a thing at Gods hand? Rom. 8. 32. *He spared not his owne Sonne.* Certainly thy heart may be amazed, more than the *Queene of Shebaes*, in seeing of *Solomon's* glory, in meditating on this, God to give his own Sonne, his onely begotten Sonne, his Sonne out of his bosome; all which are aggravating circumstances. If all the parts of the body, if all the haire of thy head, were turned into tongues, could they speak enough of this goodness of God? As God said to *Abraham*, *Now I know thou lovest me, because thou hast not withholden thy onely sonne from me.* How much more may we conclude from Gods giving his Sonne to us? As the Scripture aggravateth it thus from the quality of the person, so also from the quality of those, for whom Christ was thus given, and that is *for enemies and adversaries.* And here is an aggravating circumstance to enflame thy heart, Rom. 5. 6. *When we were without strength, when we were enemies.* To die for righteous men, to die for godly men, would not have been such an aggravation; but for sinners and enemies, this is wonderfull. Here then is another coale from the Altar, to warme thy heart with, when thou wouldst



est blesse God for Christ againe. The Scripture to aggravate this mercy, doth consider to what end he is given for us, that is, *To die for us, to die an ignominious death, to be made accursed for us, to bear the punishment of our sinnes upon himselfe.* This also doth deeply sinke into the heart. This is like oyle to the Chariot wheelles of the soul. This is like the Spirit in *Ezekiel's* wheele: Thy heart cannot be quiet, but it will exceedingly dilate it self in blessing of God for him. That whereas he who would be our Saviour, must purchase our salvation at so deare a rate; yet he doth willingly *make his soul an offering for our sinnes.* Lastly, The Scripture aggravate this comparatively, *That Christ did not take upon him the nature of Angels,* Heb. 2. 16. He did not so love them; he died not for those Apostate Angels, who yet were more glorious creatures than man; and if redeemed, would have brought God more glory; but it was for sinfull, wretched, and weak man. But this mercy of God in Christ, can never be comprehended in the depth, breadth and length thereof; it being like *Ezekiel's* waters, that will ascend higher and higher, eventill it covers our head. We may instance in a second spiritual mercy, viz. of *Conversion*, or *Effectual Calling* us out of the damned world. Oh the soul can never be affected with this! How much doth it delight to speak of his owne vilenesse and unworthinesse once, that so the riches of Gods grace in calling of us, may be the more exalted? We see it in *Paul*, 1 Tim. 1. 13, 15. how willing he is to speak what a *blasphemous persecutour* he had once been, *even the greatest and chiefest of sinners*; and therefore in him the grace of God was manifested, even for the ages to come. To this purpose also 1 *Corinth.* 15. 8, 9, 10. he speaketh, debasing himself, *That he was not meet to be called an Apostle*, because he persecuted the Church of God. This discriminating and differing grace of God, whereby God chooseth thee a poor contemptible worme, and passeth by others; many in the same Towne, in the same family, of the same profession, yet converting grace layeth hold on thee, and not on another. As our Saviour said, *There were many widowes at that time, besides she of Sarepta, yet the Prophet was sent to her alone.* This comparative worke of grace, passing by others, and taking thee, when if God would have regarded Externals, or Internals, there were richer, there were more learned, there were lesse vicious, must for ever enlarge the soule, yea so astonish her, that she will cry out, What shall I say to these things?

A third Aggravation of Gods mercy, that the people of God take notice of, is, *From the time, and season that God doth it.* In the fullnesse of time God sent his Sonne. And the Wiseman saith, *God doth every thing beautifull in its season.* To have mercy out of its due time, is to give bread instead of stones. It is like good Phylick, but not administred in its proper season. Now the observing Christian, who loveth to seek out the workes of God towards him, and studieth all Gods dispensations towards him, doth in this respect finde out infinite matter of praising of God; that the Lord should put off to helpe so long, that he should let *Lazarus* die, and be buried; all this is to make the soule affected with the seasonable timing of a mercy. To have a mercy in its season, maketh it a double mercy. Onely you must remember that Gods seasons and fit opportunities are not alwayes well discerned by us. We are ready to thinke it had beene better, if Gods help had come sooner, if he had not deferred so long; but this is, as if the patient should take upon him to direct the Physician, when is the fittest time for the administration of his medicinal helpe.

3. From the times and seasons of Gods mercies.



4. From others  
miseries.

Fourthly, The people of God aggravate their mercies, *By comparing them with others miseries.* I have health, how many are in paines and exquisite torments? I have sufficiency and fullnesse, how many *Lazar's* are there that would be glad of the crummes that fall from my Table? As those Lepers that were ready to be famished, but unexpectedly met with full provision in the *Syrian's* Camps, said, *We doe not well, (2 King. 7. 9.) let us informe the Kings household.* For alas they were ready to eat their own children through the famine, while these had all plenty. In the same manner mayest thou reflect with thy self, How many are there even of the deare servants of God, that are naked, hungry, persecuted, and destitute of all hope? There is scarce any so afflicted, or in a low condition, but he may look upon others, who are more miserable than he. This therefore will greatly sharpen thy affections to blesse God. When thou shalt compare thy mercies with others miseries, especially if you doe consider it in spirituals. How many thousands sit in Paganisme, and know nothing of Christ? How many lye roaring in hell for the same finnes, or lesse finnes (it may be) that thou hast committed? Thus if thou set thy self to aggravate the mercy of God from every consideration, thou wilt finde the circumstances will increase upon thee, as the widows oyl did; and thou wilt see thou hast more cause to blesse God, then ever thou didst apprehend at first. If I say, thou didst this, thou wouldst no more complaine of the coldnesse and chilnesse that is upon thy heart. Nothing doth so much dull the heart, as resting in generals, blessing God in generals, Take every mercy as thou wouldst some Watch or curious worke of Art, and view every piece, every part: or as those that behold some admirable Image, they are intentive to every part thereof, to observe the beauty, life and proportion thereof. Oh it is this, and this onely will draw out thy soul, and make thee have rivers of water flowing from thee! It is this that will make thee say with *Elihu*, Job 32. 18. *I am full of matter, the Spirit within me constraineth me, my belly is as wine which hath no vent, it is ready to burst like new bottles.* Thus five words of praise coming from an heart aggravating Gods mercy, are more effectual then five hundred in a formal general way.





S E R M. L X X V.

*Privative and preventing Mercies are to be accounted of, as Positive.*

2 COR. I. 10.

*Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver.*

**I**N this Text we have *Paul* celebrating the goodness of God to him, in that extream trouble mentioned before, wherein was observed, First, *The holy thankfull temper of Paul* studying to aggravate the mercy of God. He leaveth out nothing unexpressed, which may not make for the great exaltation of Gods goodness towards him. There remaineth a second Doctrine, which is,

*That the children of God are to account of the privative and preventing mercies, as much as positive.*

We should account of privative and preventing mercies, as of positive.

*Paul* calls this deliverance, a deliverance from such a death, so great a death; yet he was not actually killed, he was onely in danger of it, but because (had not the mercy of God prevented) death had surely seized on him. Therefore this mercy of preventing death, he doth judge to be (as it were) a positive deliverance from it. That as we see God doth deal with his people, *He accepteth of a willing mind for the deed.* And *Heb. 11:17.* *Abraham* is said to offer up his onely begotten sonne, because it was in the immediate disposition and preparation of his heart; he had done it, had not God prevented it: So it is here with the people of God, Those mercies which keep off the dangers that are immediately issuing out upon us, they take as if the mercy was it self positively done to them. Divines have a saying, *Plures sunt gratia privativa, quam positiva;* There are more privative favours of God, than positive; and this they apply to spiritual things. And indeed if we consider how many sins God may keep thee from, which others fall into, how many temptations God doth preserve thee in, which swallow up others, we must needs acknowledge, that we are no more able to reckon up these preventing mercies of God, than we can count the stars, or reckon up the sand upon the sea-shore.

That this truth may affect us, and cause us more to imploy our thoughts in a thankfull way towards God concerning all that evil which might come upon us, if God did not interpose. Let us take notice of these particulars.

First, *That there are some mercies God doth vouchsafe to his people, which do suppose evil to be actually come upon them.* As when *Joseph* was delivered out of prison, *Jonah* out of the whales belly, the Lord did not prevent (which he could have done, if he had pleased) but suffered them to overtake those children of his. Yea all the troubles which do befall the godly, he could have prevented them, if he had pleased. He that can deliver out of them, can also stop them from coming: but God out of wise ends, both relating to his own glory, and

1. Some mercies suppose evil inflicted, others do not.



and the good of his people, doth bring these exercises upon them. Then on the other side, There are mercies, which *do not* suppose evil actually to come upon us, but ready and prepared to fall on us, if the Lord did not forbid. That as we see it was with the Angel, when he had his drawn sword, and was ready to strike *Jerusalem* with the plague, as well as other places, the Lord did mercifully command the Angel to put up his sword. Now no doubt but *David* did account this preventing mercy, this stopping of the plague, to be as great, as if they had been delivered in the midst of it. For in regard of the preparation to this judgement, they were but as so many dead corpses. So that the people of **God** are of too narrow and straightened a spirit, when they look onely to what troubles they have been in, and God hath delivered them. Oh consider further, how many might have fallen upon thee, yea would certainly have bruised thee, had not the Lord kept them off!

2. Two sorts of evils, spiritual and temporal, which the mercy of God prevents.

Secondly, *These preventing mercies do empty themselves in a two-fold chanel.* For they are either *Temporal evils*, or *Spiritual evils*, that these mercies do relate unto: and thus preventing mercies do compasse us about all the day long; what evil might not have fallen upon thee every moment? This disease, that casualty, such a sudden and unexpected calamity. Infomuch that thou canst not hear of any misery, fallen upon any living, but it also might have come upon thee. Doth any sit mourning and wringing their hands, crying out, *O ye that passe by, see if there be any afflicted with bitterness, as I am!* And is not this thy case? Is not thy house a house of mourning, for dead fathers, or dead husbands, as well as others? Is not all this from the preventing mercy of God? The second chanel in which these mercies may be discovered, is, *In spiritual things.* And certainly here we may cry out also, *That they are more than can be numbered.* For what sinne, what temptations, what terrors and troubles of heart, what wounds and gashes of soul do any of the godly fall into, and thou mayest not also be plunged into the same? Who maketh thee to differ? *Why must not the branch ingrafted in, insult over that which is broken off, but take heed and tremble?* Is it not because God may break off those also? Oh then with bleeding and melting hearts, acknowledge and say, O Lord, what would have become of me, if left to such a passion, if forsaken in such a temptation! Why is it that I have not the guilt, the condemnation that others lie under? Is it not because thy goodness did keep me? Even as *David* was preserved in respect of that busines of the men of *Keilah*, he asketh of God, Whether they would deliver him into *Saul's* hands, and God telleth him, they would certainly do it; thereupon *David* will not commit himself to them. It is thus often in respect of thy soul; if thou go to such a place, if thou art put into such a temptation, if placed in such a condition or relation, God knoweth that this would prove a snare to thee, it would be a ruine to thee. Therefore the Lord doth so order by his mercy, that thou shalt not come into that condition. *Divines* have one kind of grace, that they call *Gratia preveniens*, which doth prevent us; it cometh upon us before we have any thought, any will or desire about it. As God said, *He was found of those, that sought him not.* And truly such preventing grace we do not only need at our first conversion, but all our life long, as much as our daily bread. Grace must prevent our mind, our will, our affections, otherwise some sinne, some lust or other would immediately fasten upon us. Let then the godly soul remember, what a deep and vast ocean this is of preventing grace, the bottome whereof thou canst never dive into. As *Paul* said, *By the grace of God, I am what I am*; so saith *Austin*, he might have added, *By the grace of God, I am not, what I am not.* It's the grace of God, that thou art not a withered tree, a barren wilderness. It is the grace of God keepeth thee from Hypocrisie and from Apostasie; what a sinner and evil wretch thou art not, it is wholly by the grace of God.

Thirdly,



Thirdly, Although the godly do thus judge of preventing mercies, as well as of positive mercies, yet because we are apt to account of mercies by sense, and feeling we have, hence it is, *That the godly are exceedingly forgetfull many times about preventing mercies.* It is often said, We never prize a mercy, till we want it. How precious is health to a diseased man, ease to a tormented man? And so also we never account any evil grievous, but while we feel it, while it is upon our backs, and thereupon we are most sensible of such mercies, which do take off this burden from us. Thus it is indeed, because we judge of all things according to our sense; but if we did let judgement work, then the godly soul would be likewise greatly enlarged for the keeping of evil, as well as removing of it. The evil we never felt, yet because ready to come upon us, had not the mercy of God kept it off, is affectionately taken notice of by that soul, which delights to search out the works of God towards it. The godly ought not to be so brutish, as to be taught only by thorns, or to be like the horse which must have alwayes the bit and bridle. *Preventing mercy* is as real a mercy as a positive one. God is as truly good in keeping of evil from thee, as removing of it: Shall God therefore lose much of his glory and honour, because thou wilt judge only by sense?

Fourthly, That therefore the children of God may know, *It is their duty to go further in the way of praise to God, then usually they do.* Let them consider these ensuing rules, concerning preventing mercies. And

1. Perswade thy self of this, *That whatsoever evil thou hast deserved by thy sinnes, and is not brought upon thee, look upon this as a preventing mercy, and be affected wit it as much as with any positive mercy.* And truly this very particular may be like a live coal from the Altar to warm and purifie thy heart. For hast thou not deserved all the curses threatned in the Law. As soon as ever as thou hast sinned, may not the Law of God immediately challenge thee, take thee by the throat, and hale thee to hell? Well if so, consider this preventing mercy of God, that keepeth thee from them. Mayest thou not truly say, remembering the deserts of thy sinne, not onely the God who delivereth from so great a death, but also so great an hell, and so great a damnation? Were not thy heart like a clod of earth, like a stone, how greatly wouldst thou be affected in this particular, saying, *It's the Lords mercy I am not in the grave; It's the Lords mercy I am not roaring in hell; for the Law curseth me, I have transgressed that, there is nothing keepeth off the execution of that dreadfull sentence, but the meer mercy of God?* And therefore if thou wert dead and raised again, if damned in hell, and yet delivered out: Would not thy mouth and heart be filled all over with blessing and praising of God? Why not then when God keepeth thee out of this destruction every moment? It's observed as the demonstration of Gods great power and mercy, that the waters of the sea being higher than the earth, yet they are so checked and bounded by the power of God, that they do not overflow the earth. This is the meer preventing mercy of God. Infomuch that *Luther said, The Inhabitants of the earth are as wonderfully preserved from destruction by the sea, as the people of Israel were in their passage to Canaan, when the waters stood like walls on both sides.* And thus it is in any mercy we enjoy, if we consider what the Law threatens, how that curseth, what we have deserved. It's a wonder of wonders that every houre we doe not fall into hell. Therefore if thou findest thy heart not affected with these preventing mercies, lay this particular close to thy soul.

2. Consider, *That whatsoever evil doth actually fall upon any other in the world, and not on thee, this is a preventing mercy.* Is another sick, and not thou? Is another poor, not thou? This is a privative mercy. For what reason can there be given of thy difference from others, but onely the dif-

3. The godly are oft forgetfull about these preventing mercies.

4. It is therefore their duty to go further in praise and thankfulness for these mercies, then usually they do. 1. Whatsoever evil is not inflicted that we have deserved, is to be acknowledged as preventing mercy.

2. Whatsoever evil falls upon others, and not upon us, 'tis a preventing mercy.



criminating mercy of God; he killeth and maketh alive, he maketh poor, and maketh rich. So that all these things are distributed according to the wisdom and pleasure of God. If so, how then cometh it about, that thou escapest such a misery, and another doth not? Afflictions rise not out of the dust, neither doth preferment and honour. God then giveth a cup of gladness and joy, or a cup of gall and wormwood to drink off. Now then look about thee, and behold how many sit in darkness, and have no light; how many are bereaved of senses, of their understandings, and of all comforts, even brought to be like *Dives* in hell, asking for a drop of water, and cannot obtain it; but it is light in thy *Goshen*, while darkness is with others. Doth not this preventing mercy melt thy soul? Art thou not made of brass and iron, if thy preservation from the miseries of others, especially the damnable and sinful wayes, do not exceedingly move thee? How canst thou carry such live coales in thy bosome, as these thoughts are, and not be wholly inflamed with them?

3. Whatsoever evil God justly may, and yet doth not inflict, 'tis a preventing mercy.

3. Acknowledge this likewise, *That whatsoever God in justice might inflict upon thee, and yet doth not, therein is also preventing mercy.* It may amaze us to consider, what objects of wrath, and examples of Gods vengeance there have been in the world. *Cain* was in the beginning of the world; God made him like an Anatomy-lecture for all succeeding evil men to beware of his impieties. *Pharaoh* also, God saith of him, *For this cause have I raised thee up; or as some contend, I have kept thee alive in the midst of those many judgements, that destroyed round about him,* Rom. 9. 17. Exod. 9. 16. Now let any thankful, godly heart meditate on these Histories. Consider these examples, Why wast not thou a *Cain*, thou a *Pharaoh*? Why should not God make thee an example of his wrath, to be a pillar of salt to season others, as well as others are to thee? Oh the depths of this preventing mercy, how incomprehensible and unsearchable are they! Must not this astonish thee to think, that whatsoever God in the way of wrath hath done to any man in the world, the same God might have done to thee, and no more have wronged thee than he did them? Account this therefore upon the riches of his mercy, that these things have not come upon thee. Look upon all such mercies, as priviledges and exemptions. God doth otherwise with thee than many others; he punisheth their sins, he animadverteth their iniquities, they are howling under his anger, and thou art preserved. It is true, God is no acceptor of persons; and therefore *Cain* cannot expostulate with God, why he did not make him *Abel*; nor can *Pharaoh* complain of God, because he was not *David*; nor yet can *Judas* find fault with the Lord, because he was not *Peter*, because as *Aquinas* observeth well, in things of meer bounty and liberality, there cannot be any accepting of persons, seeing that if no munificence to any at all were extended; there was no cause of grievance. And thus it is wholly with God, he is no debtor, nor obliged in any way of justice to man; and therefore if he do what he pleaseth with his own, *Shall thy eye be evil, because he is good?* So that God must needs be justified by these different dispensations; onely thou whom the Lord doth thus spare and exempt from his way of wrath, look upon it as so much mercy; as if God had said to the damned in hell, as he did to *Lazarus* in the grave, *Come forth.*

4. What evils God brings upon others in a providential way, and not upon thee, it is of his preventing mercy.

4. Not onely whatsoever God doth in a way of justice, but also in a providential way (which we call chance) bring upon others, and not upon thee, this also is a preventing mercy. We reade, that if a man were cutting a tree, and the Axes head fall off, and kill another, it is said, *The Lord delivered that man into his hand,* Exod. 21. 13. compared with *Deut.* 13. 19. Although to man there be such a thing as contingency and casualty, such sad things fall out many times, that no wisdom of man could fore-see, yet in respect both of Gods knowledge



ledge and providence, nothing is uncertain to God: and therefore those casual things are as much under Gods providence, as necessary things. What can be more inconsiderable than an hair? Yet *not one of these falls from the head without Gods will.* This being so, let a godly man but think with himself, How many casual murders, how many sudden and unexpected deaths have many met withall in the world? What sad changes have been made in families, in relations, by some accidents, that were never thought of, yea it may be the like never fall out again? Now then cast up thy accounts, o child of God, see how much is owing to God in this very particular: Count every such preventing mercy, as much as a positive one.

5. *Whatsoever the frailty, imbecillity and weaknesse of man would cast him into, yet God keepeth thee from; know this is a preventing mercy.* Man is such a poor, infirm creature, so many things are requisite to keep up life, that we may wonder every man who goeth from home alive, is not brought home dead at night. How is it that this candle under so many puffs of wind, is not extinguished? How cometh this spark of fire to be kept in a sea of water? So that thou mayest justly account every dayes life a resurrection from the dead. Had man no other keeper, or preserver than himself, both in temporals and spirituals, every moment he would die, both in soul and body. Say then, O Lord, my heart is affected, my soul suffers violence within me! If I had the tongue of men and Angels, I could not exalt thy mercy according to the nature of it; I look upon my self, as brought out of the grave, yea brought out of hell many times a day. The Papists have an opinion about the Virgin Mary, That she was borne in no original sinne, nor ever committed any actual sinne; and therefore (say they) when she called Christ her Redeemer, that is, by way of preservation, not that she was actually redeemed from sinne, but would necessarily have been, if Christ had not preserved her. This is an absurd and a foolish opinion. Onely in the general we may say, That Christ, as he is a Redeemer to his people by actual deliverance; so also by preservation, Christ is a Saviour, in that he preserveth thee from the sinnes thou wouldest have committed, as well as those thou hast committed. Yea all those iniquities thy heart, thy temptations would have carried thee unto, if God had not prevented, thou art to blesse God for, as well as the pardon of those sinnes actually committed by thee. Fill thy soul therefore with the meditation of these things: Say, Lord, what I am is a mercy, what I am not is a mercy! The removing of evil is a mercy; the keeping of it off is likewise a mercy.

5. Whatsoever mans own weakness would cast him into, and yet God keeps it off, is a preventing mercy.



## SERM. LXXVI.

*Of the Necessity of Gods continuing his Mercies to us, as well as his conferring Mercies upon us.*

2 COR. I. 10.

And doth deliver.

**T**He Apostle having thankfully acknowledged the goodness of God to him in what was past, he cometh to celebrate what was for the present; for we see in this Verse the goodness of God, extending it self to all differences of times: If God should but once help us, but once deliver us, we should immediately fall into utter destruction. Therefore the Apostle observeth that the mercies of God are chained together. God doth not only begin to do good, but he continueth it. Hence he addeth *καὶ ῥύεται*, and doth deliver. Indeed *Beza* speaketh of the Syriack Interpreter, as not reading this passage and also some Coppies, and therefore addeth, *Fortassis hoc redundat, it may be this is superfluous.* *Chrysostome* also taketh no notice of it, but it being so generally received in most Copies; and the Apostle naming the past and future time, it is likely he would also celebrate the goodness of God which he did enjoy for the present; for if the Lord did not continually deliver all, our former deliverances would do us no good. The Greek word *ῥύεται*, is observed by *Varrinus* to be customarily used in *Homer* for *φυλάττειν*, to keep, keeping, being a kind of deliverance; *Hesychius* renders it by *σῴζειν φυλάττειν καὶ λυεῖν*, but the most eminent and principall is *σῴζειν*, to save, and hence in the Scripture Christ who is the Saviour is called *Rom. 11. 26. ὁ ῥυόμενος*, out of *Sion* shall come the deliverer. Now when *Paul* speaketh thus in the present tense, he doth deliver, it supposeth that that as he was as yet in troubles, as he saith, *We suffer even to this present hour*, 1 Cor. 4. 11. *Paul* needeth deliverance continually, because he is in troubles continually, though happily for the present they were not so great as those he formerly conflicted with. Again, In naming the present tense he implyeth, That if God did not daily keep him, the same, or the like decumane waves would overwhelm him. But lastly, With which sense I close, this signifieth that it is not enough for God to vouchsafe mercies once to his people unless he continue to do so all the day long. From whence observe,

Gods continuing his mercies, is as necessary to us as his first bestowing them.

*That Gods continuing of his mercies is as necessary as his first bestowing of them.*

If the Lord should deliver us from any evill, and afterwards leave us to our own strength and wisdom, to preserve our selves, how inevitable would our ruine be? Therefore we must turne this Text into Prayer. O Lord, thou who hast delivered, still deliver, go on, and continue thy helping hand. To illustrate this, let us consider.

1. In



1. In what particulars this word in the Text is used in the holy Scriptures, for we are apt to look only to *bodily deliverances*, to *externall mercies*. Whereas we shall find a *soul deliverance*, and *spirituall deliverance*, principally spoken of in Gods word, and for which Christ is called the deliverer, so that the consideration of this should raise us up into spirituall and heavenly Meditations. And

What deliverances God workes for us.

1. For a *bodily deliverance*. This Paul speaketh off, 2 Tim. 4. 17. *I was delivered* ~~ipsoadulso~~, *from the mouth of the Lion, a Lion, and the mouth of the Lion*, he was in the very mouth, little hope of salvation. When the danger is so extreame, whether he meant it particularly of Nero, or whether by that he would allegorically express some eminent danger, to be sure he meaneth Gods helping hand, and that in bodily misery. Thus also Paul 2 Tim. 3. 11 enumerating severall persecutions, he concludeth, *but out of them all God delivered me*. Although therefore spirituall evils are judged by the godly the greatest evils, and spirituall deliverances the greatest deliverances; yet the godly being men, consisting of flesh and blood, they also are sensible of externall evils, and thereupon do greatly need Gods mercies towards them in their outward deliverances. Davids Psalmes do for the most part glorifie and praise God in respect of *temporall deliverances*; and therefore such Psalmes have the most powerfull influence, and do most affect the heart, when we come to be in the same dangers and feares with him; so that in all our outward deliverances we are to acknowledg God only; not our own wisdom or our own power. *Not unto us Lord, but unto thy name be all glory given*.

1. Temporall.

2. There is also a *spirituall deliverance* the Scripture mentioneth, and this ought diligently to be heeded by us.

2. Spirituall.

1. There is Christs *spirituall deliverance of us* 1 Thess. 1. 10. *in respect of the wrath and vengeance to come*, we are there said to wait for Jesus, which *delivered us from the wrath to come*. What is that wrath to come? even the day of judgement, wherein God will be avenged upon all impenitent wicked men, adjudging them to those externall torments prepared for the Devill and his Angels. Oh how little do men think of the *wrath to come*? so they may enjoy their present pleasures, their present lusts and advantages, they never remember what *wrath is to come*, for all this. Oh let the prophane man say to his soul in the midst of all jollities! well, for all this, there is wrath to come, put not this out of your mind day and night; but to the godly, the Apostle saith, *he hath delivered us from this wrath to come*. We may truly say with Agag, *The bitterness of death is over*, yea the bitterness of Hell and damnation is over. Oh what an unspeakable deliverance is this? who art thou that God should deliver thee from that wrath which consumeth so many thousands? how can the believing soul ever let this mercy slip out of his mind. When others shall hear that dreadful sentence, *depart ye cursed into everlasting fire*, then shall they be called to inherit everlasting glory. Though now for the present, for want of faith, those future things are not realized to us. Yet at that great day, when we shall see all these terrible things transacted before our eyes. Oh the thoughts of heart that then will work in us! what outrages to Mountains and Hills if possible to save them from this wrath? The godly are said to be already delivered from it, because Christ hath purchased their deliverance, and they have right thereunto by the promise of God; so that they are as firmly to conclude of it, as if it were already done. Even as we are said to sit already in *heavenly places with Christ*.

1. From wrath to come.

2. There is a *spirituall deliverance from the power of sinne and Satan*. We are by nature captives and slaves unto him, we are in bondage to every lust, and we greedily fulfill the desires of our own corrupt hearts. But by Christ we obtain a deliverance, we are set free from the power our former sinnes had over

2. From the power of sin and Satan.



us, Col. 1. 13. *Who hath delivered us from the power of darknesse, and translated us into the kingdom of his deare Son.* You see what the condition of every man is till converted, it is said to be under the *power of darknesse*. How unspeakeable is the misery of all unregenerate men, who are thus the Devils prisoners bound hand and foot, that they are not able to shake off any one sinne they are accustomed unto, neither are they willing to be delivered? They do not mourne and groane after a Redeemer; how enlarged therefore should the heart of a godly man be, when he shall see himself thus delivered? the time was I could not give over my loose and wanton wayes; I could not part from my prophane and wicked Companions; the time was, I hated such as feared God, I could not indure any holy strictness, any family-duties. The time was when the cares of the world did lord it over me, so that neither praying, or hearing, or any holy Ordinances had any influence upon me, being so greatly inflaved to those earthly thing: but now blessed be God the snare is broken, and my soul like a Bird is escaped; I can now run with delight in the wayes of God. Oh how blessed a deliverance is this, to be saved from thy former impieties, to be delivered out of thy old blindness and wickedness? Seest thou not in what miserable bondage many persons are intangled in by their lust? They have some convictions, some terrors upon their conscience; they cry out, oh that they could never fall into such sinnes again, and yet upon every temptation hideously relapse again. *Augustine* before his full conversion to God, complained of this captivity exceedingly. If therefore God hath delivered thee from thy former unregenerate estate; if he have made thee a new Creature, then know the goodness of God towards thee, is more then ever can be comprehended by thee. It cannot enter into thy heart to conceive of the fullness thereof: But because this deliverance is not compleate and perfect in this life, as appeareth *Rom. 7.* where *Paul* complaineth of a captivity, still he was plunged into, he breaketh out at last into that affectionate expression, *Who will deliver me from the body of this death?* Oh how blessed and happy will that day be! when thou shalt have no more thornes in thy side, or rather in thy heart; no more *Jebusite* to disquiet thee, but all sinne with the effects thereof shall be wholly dried up.

3. From temptations to sin and apostacy.

3. There is a *spirituall deliverance in respect of the continuall temptations we meet with in this world, to draw us to sinne, and to make us turne the back upon God.* That we may alwayes have Gods protection herein, we are taught to pray, even as often as for our daily bread, that he would deliver us from evill, *Luke 11. 4.* and herein the Lord doth vouchsafe more daily deliverance to us, then we can possibly apprehend. Every condition, every mercy, every affliction, would be a temptation to us, to allure us to sinne; did not the Lord daily deliver; What is it that keepeth thee from the Apostacy of others? and so from the wounds and gashes of Conscience, which usually fall thereupon; but the meer delivering mercy of God? Thus you see in how many particulars God doth deliver his people; but as the Doctrine is; It is not enough for God to deliver once, unless he doth it daily, continually, never withdrawing his arme from under us; and the grounds of the necessity of continued mercy are these.

Why 'tis necessary God should continue his mercies as well as give them to us.

1. Because we cannot continue them our selves.

1. *Because of our utter inability and impotency to continue the same to our selves.* If the Lord doth bestow such and such deliverances on us, leaving us afterwards to our selves, that we by our own wisdom and power should preserve our selves; Alas, This would immediately prove a ruine to us; for we can no more continue the deliverance, then we could procure it at first; he that hath delivered, must be the same that doth deliver. Its not God that hath delivered, and then we who do deliver. Humble thy self therefore thankfully under all Gods mercifull dispensations towards thee; say, O Lord I depend on thee for daily



daily bread, for daily grace, for daily pardon, for daily preservation. The same infinite power and wisdom is required to uphold thy mercy, as was at first to bring it to thee.

2. This continuance of mercy is requisite not only from our naturall imbecility, but also our *morall unworthiness*; So that though the Lord hath delivered once and twice; yet we are apt to be so unthankfull and forgetfull, that the Lord may deliver no more. Oh how often do we forfeit the good mercies that God vouchsafeth us? how often have we provoked him to take away his good gifts from us? but it is his mercy, it is his goodness to continue them unto us. Every day thou dost enough to make God take away all he had bestowed upon thee. Even as when he had made man, who revolted from him, and was plunged into obstinate wickedness; it is said *Gen. 6. It repented him that he made man, and it grieved him at the heart*; an expression to humane capacity, to shew how unworthy a Subject man was now become of all that love, God had shewn to him; and maist thou not feare, when thou lookest upon thy own barrenness and unworthy dealings with God? that God doth repent that ever he thus honoured thee; that ever he thus blessed thee; that ever he vouchsafed such grace to thee, and so take all from thee? Take *Saul* for an instance, how many personall favours did the Lord bestow on him? but at last God quite forsooke him because of his Hypocrisie and Rebellion; If therefore we consider how forgetfully and wretchedly we walk under Gods mercy, we may evidently see, that if the goodness of God did not continue them, as well as at first bestow them, we should quickly be stript of all. How many not persons only but Churches, for want of the continuance of Gods mercies are of Gardens become a very Wilderness? Is God to the Nation of the *Jewes*, as to the *Churches of Asia* as he was once? so that the demerit which is upon us after mercies received, our not improving of them for God, may provoke God after the good he hath done for us to bring all evill upon us.

2. Because of our unworthiness.

3. It is necessary the Lord should continue mercies and deliverances, as well as at first vouchsafe them to us, *because our dangers, our temptations continue*. They that renew their disease daily, must also renew their Physick. They that fall daily, need to be raised daily. Iterated troubles, need iterated deliverances. It is true, there are some mercies that cannot be iterated any more, the benefits of them may, but not the mercies themselves. Thus the Creation of the world was at first, and it would be absurd to pray that God would create it. So the Incarnation of Christ, this was once done, that it cannot be done any more; Gods Predestination likewise of his people was from all eternity; neither can it be iterated. But then there are other mercies which are duely to be continued, yea, often to be repeated; such as pardon of sinne, the daily quicknings and excitings of grace. It is true, some have of late affirmed, that sinne is pardoned from eternity, and that we cannot pray for the pardon of it; onely we may for the sense and assurance of the pardon. But it is absurd to think a sinne should be remitted, before committed; and therefore as we multiply to offend, so God is said to *multiply to pardon*. Do not therefore think it enough that God hath once sanctified thee, once justified thee; and therefore thou needest not the help and daily succour of Gods grace; for if the same grace did not preserve and keep thee, which did at first regenerate thee, thou wouldst fall into thy old *Chaos* thou wast once in: We do not therefore fall from grace, because man of himself, if absolutely considered, cannot throw himself out of it; but because Christ will loose none of his Members, and therefore he keepeth them united to him. Even as we see it is in regard of the world, it is not enough that God did once make it; but it is necessary he should conserve and uphold it, as *Heb. 1.* he keepeth up all things by his power; hence conservation is called a Creation, and they require the same infinite power for

3. Because our dangers and temptations continue.

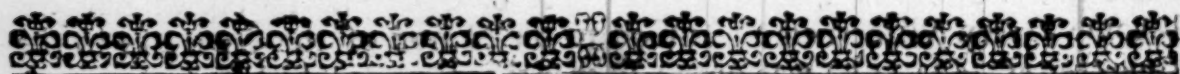
\* the



the one as as the other. Thus it is also in the work of grace, in the whole conduct to salvation. An infinite power, an infinite love must begin continue, and at last consummate. Thus by these Reasons you see, why God that hath delivered, doth continue to deliver.

*Use. 1.* To reprove that unthankfulness and unworthiness which is in most men. It is God that daily continueth their mercies to them. It's he that upholds the world. He that keeps up the meanes of grace, and yet we take these things as if they were so many debts to us. How little doth it enter into our hearts to think if God withdraw it, if God give but a blast, all the world is but as dust before him. It is God that hath continued thy health, thy strength to thee this day more, this week more. It's God continueth thy relations alive: had not he done thus, all had been broken in pieces before this time.

*Use. 2.* Doth God thus continue deliverances and mercies? then take heed of abusing them, to wantonness, of not improving them faithfully for God; if he continues thy health and life, lay it out to the Author thereof; if he continueth thy wealth, and greatness, let not the Devill and sinne have the fruit of it. Oh how unjustifiable is it? what curses and torments do we deserve, if when God continueth our mercies, we thereby serve the Devill? if the Devill did create thee; if the Devill did preserve thee; if you did live and move in him: then you might pay him out of his own. But oh the patience of God that suffereth so many wretched sinners to advance the Devils Kingdome by those good gifts he hath given to them.



## S E R M. LXXVII.

*Former Experience should be a sufficient Argument for future Confidence.*

2 COR. I. 10.

*In whom we trust that he will yet deliver.*

**I**N this last Clause we have *Pauls* confidence in the power and goodness of God, for the future bottomed upon his former and present deliverances; for were it not the duty of a believer quietly to repose his soul with a firme trusting in the truth and goodness of God; he could not live an hour, or a day, without perpetuall hesitation and anxiety about what might befall him.

In the words we have

1. His trust professed.
2. The matter or object thereof.

The profession of his confidence is in these words, *eis de alaxmaw*, in whom we have hoped, *Erasmus* rendreth, in whom we have fixed hope, in opposition to that vain, moveable, and uncertain hope, which men have in earthly and transitory things; we render it *trusting*, though it be not the same word with that used in the 9. Verse; But we told you that *faith* hath its *trusting*, and *hope* hath its *trusting*, and these two graces are of so near affinity, that they are often put for one another; and indeed they both denote some recumbency and



and resting of the soul upon him, whom they trust or hope in : So that as we read *μετ' ἐν εἰς πᾶν θεόν*, and *ἐν τῷ θεῷ*, so also of *ἐλπίζεν ἐν τῷ θεῷ*, 1. Tim. 5. 5. and *ἐν θεῷ*, 1 Tim. 4. 10. Which words denote, that hope doth alwayes carry along with it some affections, and cordiall adhesion to God ; So that as we reject the Popish distinction of *fides informis* and *formata*, we do also of *spes informis* and *formata* ; because the grace of hope doth sanctifie the soul for its respective operations, as well as love doth to its proper actings. Concerning the word *ἐλπίζω*, *Favorinus* saith, it differeth thus from *προσδοκῶ*, which is applyed to the expectation of evill things, as well as of God. (although in the Scripture it is hardly used any where, but concerning good things.) Whereas *ἐλπίζω*, is only used of good things ; the word coming either of *ἐλπω*, or *ἐλκω*, to draw ; because the things hoped for, do draw and allure the soul towards them. Among the *Latins*, *sperare* is sometimes for *timere*, but that is very abusively spoken. You see then, whom *Paul* maketh the object of his hope and trusting, even *God* alone. So that we may not place our hope, in the wisdom or power of men, nor in Angels or Saints ; no not as instrumentall causes to procure us our good we need : For a divine hope, must have for the motive of it divine truth and goodness ; divine power and help, as well as assenting faith, must have divine revelation and authority. Besides, second causes though causatively concurring to such effects, yet because they have both their esse, and *operari* dependently from God, and so do not help in and of themselves, it is vain to trust in them.

2. There is the object trusted for, and that is, a temporall deliverance. For although God himself, and eternall glory, be the principall objects of our hope and trust ; yet temporall mercies may be the secondary and less principall, as they relate and conduce to this eternall blessedness ; for some are only to hope for outward mercies, as thereby our everlasting happiness may be advanced. Now *Paul* by trusting in God for future deliverances, doth thereby suppose that he shall alwayes be in dangers ; and that though once or twice delivered, yet new temptations will assault him. But though they do, he is not disheartned. The sense he hath had of Gods former mercies, doth encourage him for the future : for seeing God doth help his people because they are in misery, because they are his, and he stands engaged in promise to them : These Reasons being perpetuall and alwayes the same, no wonder if Gods mercies and deliverances likewise be continuall. Observe.

*That the experience of Gods goodness and power to his people formerly, may encourage them to trust in him for the future.*

The experience of former mercies should encourage us to trust in God for the future.

*Paul* was delivered by God, and therefore he trusteth he will deliver him. Thus *David* also argued, 1 Sam. 17. 37. *God had delivered from the Lion and the Beare, therefore also he trusted, he would from that uncircumcised Philistian.* Hence at another time *David* professeth, *He will remember the mercies of God, which had been of old ; for these are of great use to keep the heart fixed for the future.* We have the Apostle expressing his confidence even concerning others, and that in the matter of grace and salvation ; from the foundation God had already laid that spirituall building, Phil. 1. 6. *Bring confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will performe it till the day of Jesus Christ.* That this hope in *Paul* concluding from one deliverance to another, was fixed upon, may see also at another time, 2 Tim. 4. 18. Where having acknowledged Gods mighty preservation to him, in that he was delivered from the mouth of the Lion, he addeth, *And the Lord shall deliver me from every evill work ;* How greatly then are the people of God to be reproved for their diffidence and distrust,



who though they have the Word of God, and the workes of God; the promise of God, and the providences of God, upon which to quiet their soules concerning all events to come: yet upon every new trouble, are as much tormented and perplexed, as if they had never heard or known any thing of God.

Considerations clearing the truth.

1. Though we have oft had experience of Gods goodness, yet every new trouble is ready to startle us.

To amplyfie this, consider,

1. *That although we have in many particulars found the goodness and power of God to us; yet every new trouble, every new danger, is ready to startle us, and to overwhelm us.* The Children of God in any new exercise, are many times as much to feare, as if they had never been delivered by him. They are ready to feare, that now they shall sink, though hitherto preserved. Even as *David*, when his trust in God was weakned, then he cryeth out, *He should one day perish by the hands of Saul*: all the great deliverances vouchsafed to him, did not settle his heart for the future. Such therefore is the diffidence, and sinfull fear which is ready to surprize us upon any new tryall, that we are apt to think; though God hath done thus and thus for us, yet can he conquer this temptation? can he help out of this trouble? This is worse then all the rest; and can he deliver herein? Even as we read of the people of *Israel*, who had the experience of so many wonderfull preservacions, and miraculous mercies bestowed on them in the Wilderness, *Psalme 78. 19.* yet questioning, *Whether he could furnish a Table in the Wilderness?* and *Verse 20.* *Behold he smote the rock, and waters gushed out; can he give bread also?* See here how they limited God to one mercy, and to one deliverance; now this was so great a sinne, that the *Psalmist* calls it, *a speaking against God*, it was *Blasphemy*; and he addeth an aggravating particular, *yea, they speak against God*; as if this were a greater sinne then all their former rebellions; therefore it is said *Verse 21, 22.* *The Lord heard this, and was wroth, his fire was kindled against Jacob: Because they trusted not in his salvation.* Oh let this be a dreadfull instance, never to be forgotten by thee! how often doth thy heart say such things? God hath hitherto maintained; hitherto delivered; hitherto provided for me, and mine: But, *Can he furnish a Table in this Wilderness? can he succour me in this exigency that I am now plunged in?* Oh take heed of such distrusting thoughts! it is, speaking against God, it is a kind of blasphemy.

2. Though the promises be sufficient grounds for our trust, yet experiences do much promote faith.

2. *Although the promise of God be ground sure enough for us to trust in, yet such is our weakness and infirmity, that experiences and sensible props do wonderfully promote our faith.* Could we act purely and perfectly from Divine Motives, the promise of God would be as good to us, as all the experiences in the world; for it is the word of him that cannot lye; and therefore nothing of sense or reason, is so sure as that of faith. But because we consist of a body as well as a soul; therefore as in other things, God doth condescend to our weakness, so here also. The Sacraments and miracles were vouchsafed by God, to confirme our faith; not that they add any certainty to the promise, or can bring more authority to it; only in respect of our imbecillity, so they became helps to our faith. Thus also when we have great and glorious promises, which may abundantly satisfie us, so as to conquer all distrustfull and perplexing thoughts, yet experiences joyned with these; and when we see him fullfilling with his hand, what he hath spoken with his mouth; this doth greatly add to our confidence. It is true, our Saviour saith, *John 20. 29.* to *Thomas*, who would not believe, unless his sense did confirme him, *Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed*, because such do give more glory and honour to God; As *Abraham* did, who regarded the power of God, resting on that, and considered not *Sarabs* dead Wombe: Yet they are not wholly cast off by God, who do believe, and see also. There is a time when we are



to trust in God before we can have experience of Gods dispensations; such is the time of conversion. Then the soul being brought into the deeps of the Lord, then it being in divers and sad agonies, the heart is more difficultly brought to trust in God. For all things are then new; the soul never felt such temptations before; it was never in such feares before; it is ready to cry out, Never any was in the like case with me; what will be the issue of those wonderfull things, in his soul he knoweth not. All this diffidence is, because at that time the believer had no experience of Gods dealings; is not acquainted with the deep mysteries of God in bringing us to salvation, our with the depths of Satan, who indeavours our destruction. But when once the soul cometh to have more experience of Gods works upon it selfe, and is more acquainted with the wayes of God, then he comes to hope, whereas before he was ready to cast off all in despaire. If then God hath from year to year, trained thee up in many experimentall discoveries of soul-mercies, and body-mercies; how inexcusable wilt thou be, if thou art ready to be shaken, and to loose thy hold upon every new trouble? Gods promise should be enough to thee; thou needest no more: If a man that is faithfull and able should assure thee so much, thou wouldst rest contented. How unworthily then dost thou deale with God, when his word and his workes put together, yet do not compose thy heart? Oh remember! is not he the God, that created light out of such darkness, as did once cover thy soul? Is not he the God, that helped in such a trouble? that came in with so seasonable a deliverance? and when thou knowest his name thus, wilt thou not trust in him?

3. *It is a speciall way to keep the heart in a serene and quiet frame, to exercise trust in God for the future.* Not only to bless God for the mercies we have, and do enjoy; but also as confidently and securely to trust in God for all future things, that shall befall us, as if we did for the present enjoy what we could desire. We shall find, that for want of this trusting in God for the future, all our anxieties and disquietness doth arise. We do continually create unto our selves constant molestations of spirit, because we make suppositions about the future. What if I should be brought into such a condition? What if such a sad estate should befall me? What if I be left unto such a temptation? Thus constant conflicts about what is to come, taketh off all joy and thankfulness, for what we have for the present. Therefore it is a speciall duty in the Children of God, to be acting dependently upon God for the future, as well as for the present. Our Saviour *Mat. 6. 25.* doth by severall choise and precious Arguments, indeavour to conquer that ill temper in his Disciples, who were so solicitous what would befall them to morrow? how they should be clothed hereafter? how they should live hereafter? Therefore the Child of God is to live with as much joy and contentation in respect of future things, as if they were present; And this is the reason why the promises in Scripture are sometimes expressed in the past tense, and sometime in the present, because we are also as much assured of every good thing promised, as if we had it already in our hands.

4. *The good things we are to trust in the Lord for, as future, are both spirituall and temporall things.* Though Paul speakes here, and David many times in his *Psalmes* of trusting in God for temporall mercies; yet the most noble and excellent objects of our confidence, is to be eternall glory, or the enjoying of God in that state of blessedness. Hence it is, that God is sometimes, and everlasting glory is sometimes called *our hope*, because in the expectation of these things the soul is daily supported: and certainly if the Husbandman would not plow, but in hope; neither would a believer indure all those sufferings and afflictions for Christs sake, but for this hope. This trusting, to have that unspeakable joy hereafter, and to be for ever with God, should be put forth more

3. 'Tis a good way to keep the heart calme, even to exercise trust in God for the future.

4. The future good things that we are to trust in the Lord for, are both spirituall and temporall.



Object.

Answer.

vigorously by us. And we should find it excellently usefull to weane us from the world, and to make us part with our dearest comforts for Christs sake; yea, as was hinted before, we are to trust in God, for these temporall things only as they are conducive thereby, because God hath promised them no further, and so farre they are absolutely promised; insomuch, that we may no more distrust God about temporall things, so farre as necessary to our salvation, then we may of spirituall and gracious things: which may detect the Hypocrisie of our hearts, whereby we please our selves, as if we trusted on Christ for our justification, and the salvation of our soules; when in the mean while we distrust him about a morsell of bread, or a drop of water. Only it may be doubted, how *Paul*, and any godly man can trust in the Lord for the future about temporall mercies, seeing that the godly may many times be without them; and if *Paul* be delivered once by God, it doth not follow, he must be delivered every time; for then he could not have suffered Martyrdome as he did at last. And why might not *John* the Baptist, and *James* have trusted in the Lord to be delivered? Which if they had done, it had been a false trusting. To this some say, that we are as absolutely bound to trust in God for every temporall mercy, as we are for any spirituall; and that it is meerly for want of faith or trusting in God, if we have not all the temporall deliverances we stand in need of. If a man dye of the Plague, they will say it is for want of faith in God; but although no doubt the People of God are greatly to be blamed for their diffidence, and for want of trusting in God, they loose many outward mercies; yet because temporall things are not so absolutely promised as spirituall, therefore there cannot be such an absolute trusting for them. Others they say, that we are to trust in God conditionally. To rest upon him for this and that mercy, with this condition, if God will. But those that say we are absolutely to pray for temporall things, these must also conclude, that we are to trust in God for them absolutely likewise: and therefore such do not like that expression, by way of condition, when we pray for these outward mercies. They like not this expression in prayer, *Father, if it be thy will, recover such an one that is sick*. They think this is not a Prayer, because from a conditionall supposition, no certain thing is inferred.

Others therefore they conclude, we are to pray absolutely for temporall things, (and by consequence we may also add to trust for them,) only there ought to be a submission in our spirits, that if God give us not our requests, we yield our selves up to his holy and wise will. Thus with them, though we may not pray with condition, yet we ought with subordination; and happily they that speak of this condition, mean no more then subordination. There is then a difference about trusting in God concerning spirituall and temporall things; eternall glory absolutely, and such a measure of grace as will beare us through all temptations, that we shall not totally and finally be overcome by them, temporall things with subordination, yet so farre also absolutely about them, that no good thing shall be withheld from us; so that we may with *Paul Rom. 8.* in an holy triumph profess, *That neither life nor death; neither things present, or things to come, shall separate us from the love of God in Christ.*





## SERM. LXXVIII.

## Of Motives to trust in God, and the Opposites to it, Presumption and Despair.

2 COR. I. 10.

*In whom we trust, he will yet deliver.*

**E**xperiences of Gods mercies that are past (you heard) may justly encourage us to trust in God for the future. Now although much hath been said concerning this necessary grace of *trusting*, with the object in which, and for which, yet some particulars are to be added for further explication. As

First, There are some peculiar and proper motives, to trust in God, which were the personal privileges of some believers only; and there are general common ones, which do belong to all the godly. As for example, when David in that place mentioned before, argued, that God who had delivered from the Bear and Lion, would also from that *uncircumcised Philistin*. We may very well conclude, that David in that particular act, had some immediate inspiration, and divine instinct upon his soul, whereby he was raised up to trust in God assuredly, for that particular deliverance. And this is the more probable, because of the manner he did encounter Goliath with, going out against him, *In the Name of the Lord*, with a sling, and stones out from the brook. By which preparation it is plain, that David was therein guided by immediate revelation. And happily Paul in this act of trusting, which here he professeth, he might have more than the general and ordinary promises, which all the people of God have to rely upon, there might be some special assurance and revelation vouchsafed to him, that he had more work to do for God, that all his enemies could not for the present take away his life. Therefore he addeth, *He will yet deliver*; not *always*, but *as yet* he will, till he had finished his course, and fought the good fight of faith, he was called to. Thus we read that Paul had a vision, Acts 18. 9, 10. while he was at this Corinth, commanding him, *Not to be afraid, for no man should set on him to hurt him*. Thus many of the people of God in former times, they had immediate revelations, and personal discoveries made to them, whereby they were called to believe in God for such a particular temporal mercy, and that every way absolutely. But then

2. There are common, general mercies, which are to work upon all the godly; and such are those universal propositions revealed in Gods word, whereby we are antidoted against diffidence and distrust in any estate whatsoever. So that although thou hast not that peculiar revelation made to thee for such mercies, as those Ancients had, yet thou hast as sure a word of promise to depend upon. For it is the same God which speaketh in a general promise to thee, that did in a particular to them. Hence we find the Apostle comforting and encouraging the godly by such a promise, as

1. There are motives to trust in God from both the personal and general privileges of believers.



was peculiarly made to *Joshua* in that extraordinary Office he was called unto, *Heb. 13. 5. For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*; from this see what he inferreth, *So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper*: which proveth, that even particular promises made to any godly man, do in the general reason of them belong to every believer. Even as we say of the *Judicial Law*, though the particular duty or punishment may not oblige us Christians, yet the moral equity and reason, upon which it was grounded, doth. So though the very particular thing promised belong not to thee, yet that protection, support and preservation, which is necessary to thee in thy way, that thou mayest rely upon God for. Know then, that it is but the deceitfulness of thy heart, when thou thinkest, *Oh if God would speak from Heaven to me, or if an Angel should come from God, and bid me, Be of good comfort, this or that shall be done for thee, then I could rest satisfied*. For if thou dost not believe God speaking in a general promise, neither wouldst thou in a particular one. *Mary Magdalen*, and some others had a peculiar particular testimony from Christ, *That her sinnes were forgiven her*, yet every humbled and repenting sinner may apply the promises of pardon to his own soul, as fully and as boldly as she did. For Christ doth still in the world speak so to every unfeigned convert. It is true, we grant, that in the Apostles dayes, when the gift of miracles was necessary for the Church, then some had a peculiar command and promise by faith and trusting, wherein they were able to do miracles and wonders, and this was called, *The faith of miracles*. And for any to conceive such a thing of himself now, and to trust in God for to performe some miracle, is to be ignorant of what spirit we are: yet still we are called to a faith and trust in God, which is almost as wonderfull, as that of *Miracles*. The trusting in God for the pardon of thy sinnes, for thy preservation in temptations, for thy safe conducting thee to Heaven, through all the oppositions in the way, is as difficult as miraculous faith. So also the trusting upon God in temporals, when thy condition hath been like a wilderness, when no visible hopes or props have appeared, is like a miraculous faith. Hence there are learned Divines (*Synopsis puri. Theol.*) that do grant, there is still in the godly a faith, though not miraculous, yet answering that, which they call *Fides specialis*, whereby the Spirit of God doth in a peculiar manner raise up the soul to trust in God. For this particular God sometimes, when he provideth a mercy for his people, doth prepare their hearts to expect it. Onely we must take heed that we do not baptize our delusions, and the strong conjectures of our humane persuasions with the name of this *special faith*. The summe of this head is to informe the people of God, that the general promises are as sure an anchor to fasten thy soul in the midst of waves, as particular are.

2. What are the opposites to trusting in God.

1. Presumption.

Signs of presumption.

1. When we walk not by Scripture-light.

Secondly, It is good to consider, *What are the immediate opposites and contraries to this grace of trusting in God, that so we may avoid those rocks from splitting our souls thereat.*

The first enemy to it is *Presumption*, and that is, *When men do not trust in God, in his way*. We represent God to our selves in our own carnal imaginations, and then we trust in him, which is indeed nothing else, but to trust in our vaine lying hearts. Now this presumption, which hath the appearance of trusting in God, but is not so, may be discovered these wayes:

1. *When we do not judge of God according to the Scripture-discovery made of him, when we walke not by Scripture-light*. There can be no trusting in God without a true knowledge of him out of his Word. Now if you observe ignorance herein is the cause of all that presumption which drowneth many souls in perdition. Take the most prophane and profligate wretch, who like

*Cain*



Cain almost have the marks of Gods displeasure against them, palpably manifesting themselves, yet they will tell you, they trust in God for mercy, they rest on Christ to be saved: Is not all this, because they do not know God out of his Word? If they did, would not they find there, that he is angry with the wicked every day, *That he is a consuming fire; That if a man regard iniquity in his heart, God will not hear such a mans prayer?* Are not these so many thunder-bolts to strike thee out of thy presumption?

2. It is not trusting in God, but *presumption*, *When we are confident and bold, where we have no promise from God.* For this you heard, That Gods promise and our trust, doth necessarily respect each other: So that if you take away the promise, you remove the foundation, and so faith must fall to the ground. And this doth plainly also discover, that that which some call their trusting, and their dependance upon God, is nothing but their arrogance and their false presumption. Such are the confidences that men have for suffering in their heretical and damnable opinions. No doubt but such may finde in themselves a resolved and pertinacious frame of heart, which they call a *trusting in God*; but because they have no promise made to their errors, therefore they have no true faith in God. I speak of such opinions, as are not consistent with the work of grace, and fundamental principles of Religion: otherwise if gold and precious stones be built on the foundation, though hay and stubble be the superstructure, such shall be saved, yet so as by fire.

2. When we are confident without a promise.

3. *Presumption* is palpably discovered from trusting in God, *By severing the meanes from the end.* And this is commonly made the very essence of presumption, that it divideth those things, which God hath necessarily conjoyned together. It is the Scriptures maxim, which can never fall to the ground, *That without holiness no man shall see God.* Where there is no grace here, there shall not be any glory hereafter: yet do not men generally presume, as if that Text would not prove true; otherwise, why is it, that thou dost not lay all thoughts and endeavours about other things aside, and see to the work of grace above all things? I may be wealthy and damned, I may be learned and damned, but I cannot be gracious and damned: yet who is there that maketh this his study and inquisition of soul, whether this necessary work of grace hath ever yet been wrought in him? But

3. When we separate the means from the end.

4. This *presumption* is still the more palpable and gross, *When men do not onely divide between the true meanes and the end, but use false and contrary means.* And this is the condition of all those who live in the common practice of any gross sinne, never reforming of it. For these men to trust in Christ, to be saved, living and dying after that manner, is the most absurd and maddest presumption that can be: As if thou shouldest think by brimstone, to quench the fire upon thy house. God indeed doth sometimes work his glorious ends by those means which are contrary; but for thee to think to go to Heaven by the way that leadeth to hell, argueth thou art bewitched with thy lusts. Repent, for thou art as yet in the gall of bitterness, and bonds of iniquity.

4. When we use false means

Lastly, *This presumption doth powerfully, but subtilly work in all those, who deny either in whole, or in part the grace of God, and thinke by their owne strength and merits to obtain the good things they hope for.* Therefore *Pelagians* and *Papists* do by the very genius of their Doctrine, teach men to presume, when they define their *Spes* to be, *Partim è gratiâ Dei, partim è meritis proveniens.* So that pure faith, and trusting in God, is not taught by Popish principles, but presumption and self-confidence is taught by a Law. And under this head, all those civil and moral men are comprehended, who think that for their own righteousness, God must bestow such and such mercies upon them: a sinne that every man is very prone unto, as appeareth by *Moses* his prohibition of it

5. When we think by our own strength to obtain grace and glory.



so often in one Chapter to the *Israelites*, Deut. 9. 4, 5, 6. *Speak not in thy heart, saying, for my righteousness the Lord hath brought me to possess this Land.* The *Pharisee* then doth presume as well as the *Publican*, though upon different grounds.

## 2. Despair.

The second opposite on the contrary is, *Despair*. Indeed all diffidence and distrust doth gradually and in part oppose this excellent grace; but despair doth fully and totally. And this arise from these causes:

Whence despair arises.

1. From low thoughts of God. As

1. The power of God.

1. Low thoughts of God and his Attributes.

2. High thoughts of our own sins and unworthiness. Both these commonly go to make the soul wholly distrustfull.

First, *Low thoughts of God, and his Attributes.* As if God had not power and strength enough to do what he promised. As that Lord, who would not believe God could suddenly provide such incredible plenty. And this is the reason why God doth represent his Greatness, Majesty and Power so often, because all the distrustfull thoughts we have, do arise, because we measure God after the capacity of a man. Hence is that expression, *Zech. 8. 6.* when God had promised the restoration of the people of *Israel*, an impossible thing to humane conjectures, *If it be marvellous in the eyes of the people, should it also be marvellous in my eyes. saith God?* As also that full affirmation, *That with God nothing is impossible;* yea nothing is hard and difficult to God; he doth as easily work extraordinary and miraculous things, as he doth ordinary and common things: But why do we diffide or despair at any time, but because we judg of God according as we would do of men?

2. The goodness of God.

Again, *Low thoughts about the goodness, mercy, and compassions of God, do compell to despair.* My thoughts as are not your thoughts; but as the Heavens do exceed the earth, so doth my wayes your wayes, saith God in this particular about pardon of sinne, *Isa. 55. 8, 9.* Narrow apprehensions also about the dignity, merit, and infinite worth of Christ, of his Godhead as well as manhood, maketh us to sink under the guilt of our sinnes. How could any tormenting teares arise in thee, if the love of Christ, and the atonement by his blood be considered in the breadth, length and depth of it. It was attentive meditation on this infinite subject, that made *Paul* so triumph, and be raised above the guilt of his sinns, his *Egyptian* sinns, were easily drowned in this sea of blood.

3. Of the merits of Christ.

2. From wrong apprehensions about our sinns.

The second cause of our despair and total distrust in God, is a *preposterous and irregular apprehension about our sinnes.* That no soul can obtain pardon without repentance, without a deep and serious humiliation, is without doubt the Scripture-Doctrine; but then every contrite soul is to know, that there is a spiritual skill and heavenly art required in this sorrow for it. If we so look upon sinne, as to think it our duty to flie from Christ, to runne from the promise, that no consolation doth belong to us: This is not repentance for sinne, but running from one sinne to another: As if the *Israelites* stung with a Serpent would obstinately refuse to look upon the brazen Serpent. For the Gospel that vouchsafeth other light, that informeth us, as soon as ever we have unfeigned sorrow for sinne, and are brought low in our own eyes, not to stay in that wilderness, not to think that we can make any satisfaction by tears or sorrow, but immediately to lay hold on Christ, and to imbrace those offers of grace, which are tendered to all that are poor and contrite in heart. Hence it is that the Spirit of Adoption, and an Evangelical frame of heart, are wonderfully conducing to trust in God; as legal terrors, and tormenting fears of conscience do greatly shake the foundations of all hope in God.

3. This grace of trusting in God cannot be expected to be perfect here.

Thirdly, *You are alwayes to remember, that although we are to presse after perfection in this grace, as well as any other, yet none can attain to such a constant, settled, and fixed frame of heart in trusting in God, that in no temptation, or at no time, he should ever be moved and cast down with diffidence.* Who can



can expresse greater trust in God than *David* doth at sometimes? yea would think this *mountain* can never be moved, as *Psal.* 112. 7. which indeed is spoken of every godly man, *He will not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord,* *Psal.* 56. 3. *at what time, I was afraid; I will trust in thee.* Yea in many *Psalms* did he so farre proclaim his confidence in God, that by the event it seemeth, that this did regenerate into self-trusting, for which God did forsake him sometimes, and leave him in darkness. But as confident as he is in God sometimes, you have him at other times as much dejected, and without comfort or support. Though therefore thou prayest and mournest after this blessed grace, which if perfectly enjoyed, would put thee into Heaven, while on earth, yet look to be often in conflicts, sometimes trusting, and sometimes distrusting, till God should make thee perfect in Heaven, where there is no more ground for fear, sorrow, or any diffidence.

Let the Use be to humble the children of God under all those distrustfull and despondent thoughts they labour with. What are become of Gods mercies of old? Where are thy former experiences? Let such as never knew the name of God, that have no interest in Christ, or his promises; let such (I say) like *Judas* and *Cain*, go up and down with perpetual tremblings and anxiety of heart: but thou dishonourest God, and the promise, and that holy calling by which thou art called, while thou art tormenting thy self with cares about future things. *Matth.* 6. 36. It is made the *Gentiles* sinne, an *Heathenish* sinne. How then cometh it about that Christianity hath taught thee no better? Who may walk confidently, and with quiet spirits, though the Earth be removed into the Sea, if thou mayest not? *Aristotle* giving Characters of confident men, (*Rhetor. lib. 2<sup>do</sup>.*) among others hath these two particulars, 1. Such are confident, *who have great power and might, or have friends that are so: Now is there any greater than God? Is there any mightier than he?* 2. Those are confident (saith he) *that are well-affected to religious and divine things.* And is it not thus with thee? Art not thou carefull to observe the commands of God? Art not thou tender about his worship, and his glory? Indeed sinne and contempt of holy things, that must needs emasculate and take away all courage; but thy faithfulness to God, may make thee assured of his faithfulness to thee.





## SERM. LXXIX.

*How we are to relie upon God, and yet make  
use of requisite Means too.*

## 2 COR. I. 11.

*You also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed  
upon us by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by ma-  
ny, on our behalf.*

**T**He Apostle having commemorated the goodness and power of God in his deliverances, attributing all to his mercy, he doth in this verse declare what helps and means were likewise to be used for the accomplishing thereof. For he that trusteth in God alone for any deliverance, doth also diligently use those appointed means, which God hath commanded. Neither doth the goodness and power of God to do any thing for us, disoblige us from a carefull attendance to those wayes, wherein the mercy is to be obtained.

In that therefore *Paul* having expressed his assurance of present and future deliverance, doth also excite and exhort them to pray for him, we have

1. A Demonstration of the nature of that confidence which was in him; it was *divine* and *genuine*, not *presumption*, which separateth end and means from another.

2. Here was an Evidence of his *humility* and *modesty*. For though a Saint in the highest forme, farre excelling others in gifts and graces, yet he earnestly desireth the prayers of those that are inferiour to him.

The Text therefore is a further amplification of his deliverance:

1. From the *Means* used to obtain it. *Piscator* calleth this prayer, *Causam adjuvantem*, but that expression is too big. The Churches prayer is a means, not a cause prevailing in the behalf of others.

2. From the *End*, which is, *Thanksgiving by others*, as in time is to be shewed.

Let us consider the *Means* specified in the Text; and therein we have the *Means* it self, *Συνυπεργύντων ἡ ὑμῶν τῇ δόξῃ*. The particle *ἡ* is emphatical, *You also*, implying, that neither Gods promise, or his power, would procure this mercy alone without their prayer. Besides the goodness of God on his part, there must be prayer on their part. The word in the original for *helping* is emphatical, being twice compounded. *ὑπεργύντων*, This word doth denote the *Service and Ministry of those who are under us*; and so it doth imply, that the Church doth owe as a debt unto their spiritual guides earnest prayer for them. Though the Ministers be their servants in some respects, in respect of the end of their office, as all Governours are; yet they are their servants in other respects, by way of obedience to their word, and constant prayer for them. But then there is the Preposition *συν* added, which doth denote not onely their effectual prayers, but their concord and agreement therein, and that in their publick



lick and solemn Assemblies. Again, the word signifying to *work* and *labour*, doth denote what the nature of prayer is, that the soul labours therein, is fervent, full of agonies: which sheweth, that the customary formal prayers of most people are not worthy of the name; there is no labour or fervency of the soul therein.

In the second place, You have the way, *how they laboured by prayer*. The meaning of *Ans.* is to be spoken to afterwards. They did not labour by using friends to sollicite the Magistrate in *Paul's* behalf, for there was no hope from them, but they made their addresses to God.

Lastly, Here is the Subject *upon*, *You helping together*. It is an honour *Paul* puts upon them by this expression, and thereby also commendeth their duty to them, of praying for them.

Several Observations are contained in this particular. As

First, Whereas we see *Paul* resting alone upon the goodnesse and power of God for his deliverance, yet not excluding, but rather desiring the prayers of the *Corinthians*, as a necessary means to have this also obtained. Observe,

*That it is a Christians duty not to separate from, or oppose the grace and power of God to the duties and means he also hath required.*

'Tis our duty not to separate Gods power and goodnesse from the means required.

Not to say, because it's Gods grace, and Gods work, therefore I will sit down and do nothing. Now on the other side, God commands me to pray, to work, therefore it is not the grace of God, but my duties that do justifie and save me. You may read how happily the Apostle conjoyneth them together, *Phil. 2. 12, 13. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do.* It is true, the enemies of Gods grace, who detract from it in whole or in part, do gladly imbrace this truth, and compel it to go two miles further than it would; They force it so much, that blood cometh out in stead of milk. As *Austin*, while he writeth against *Manichees*, *Pelagians* did take some expressions of his commending them exceedingly (as that all sinne must be voluntary, else it could not be a sinne, &c.) as if he had been on their party. Then on the other side, when he did valiantly write against the *Pelagians*, they branded him for a *Manichee*. So hard a matter is it to defend truth which lieth between two extreames; but while we set against one, we are thought to draw nigh to another. And thus it is in the Doctrine now observed, while we maintain the necessity of our duty, as well as Gods grace, we are thought to go into the *Papists* quarters. Again, while against them, we set up the grace and power of God, excluding, though not the duties and means God hath appointed, yet the merit and causality of them, we are thought to joyn with the *Antinomians*, whereas indeed we have no affinity with either.

Let us therefore labour after that spiritual skill and discerning whereby we may be able to know what God doth, and what we are to do, yet so as not to take off in the least manner from the glory of God.

First, Therefore consider, *That all the great spiritual mercies which God doth vouchsafe in time to his people, have many things concurrent before they be accomplished.* It is not the presence of one thing alone can effect that mercy, unless all be present: I say it is thus with these spiritual priviledges God vouchsafeth in time. For as for *predestination*, which is an immanent act, and the purpose of God from eternity to prepare for glory. There is nothing at all concurrent to that, but the meer good pleasure of his will. The Scripture alwayes resolveth it into that alone, but it is otherwayes with *justification* and *glorification*. For to *justification* many things are required, there is the grace of God,

How God and the creature work together  
1. All Gods spiritual mercies have many things concurrent before they be accomplished



as the *efficient cause*, the blood of Christ as the *meritorious cause*, and faith as the *instrument*, the hyssop to sprinkle this blood upon the soul. Now till all these meet together, a man is not justified. God indeed hath decreed to justify thee from all eternity; but the actual justification of thy person is in this order and method. So for glorification, the kingdom of glory is said to be prepared for the godly, viz. from eternity, they were before the foundations of the world were laid, elected to this everlasting happiness; but an holy life, and a godly conversation is the way thereunto. No unclean thing can enter there. This being so,

2. The opposing of these requisites one against another, hath bred much confusion and error.

Hence in the second place, *It hath alwayes bred much confusion and error in Doctrine, to oppose these requisites one against another.* To argue from the inclusion of some to the exclusion of others; if duty, then no Christ; if Christ, then no duty. The *Antinomian* he argueth, If Christ by his blood made atonement for our sinnes, if our iniquities were laid upon him, then we are justified from that time in the sight of God, before we do believe or repent. Now whence ariseth this error? Because they consider not that as Christ is required in a meritorious way, so also faith in an instrumental way: And though Christ do more principally concur to our justification, yet faith is required by necessity of precept and means also. Christ without faith doth not justify, no more than faith without Christ. Hence they are put together, *Rom. 3. 25. Whom God hath set out to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.* The *Papist* on the other side, though the Scripture mentioneth not the word merit and satisfaction, yet by their forced consequences they would establish such a Doctrine. Now in the sense they and others plead for works, notwithstanding all their subtil distinctions; The Apostle argueth infallibly, *Rom. 11. If of grace, then not of works; and if of works, then grace is no longer grace.* Though therefore some do more grossly then others set up works against Christ, yet they become guilty of dishonouring him, who give him not the sole glory of our redemption.

But you will say, *If Gods grace and our duty must go together, if we must look to Christ for salvation, and yet to holiness, to prayer and repentance, as the means conducing thereunto: How may we be directed so to live, as that we shall give all to the glory of Gods grace, and his power, and yet to all in the duties God hath commanded, without any negligence therein? For seeing that Satan is very busie in his temptations on both sides, either to be careless of prayer, and other ordinances, because we are to give all to Christ; or because they are necessarily required, to put our trust and confidence in the performance of them, it is good to be informed wherein the way is clear for a believers avoiding all dangers.*

How we should relie wholly upon Christ, and yet make use of the means, and how we may know whether we do or no.

1. When we acknowledge whatsoever we have to come from Christ.

To answer this, which will indeed explicate the whole nature of the Doctrine, consider these particulars:

First, *Then thou mayest relie on Christ, and yet be diligent in the use of all Ordinances, when thou doest acknowledge all the power thou hast, both in whole or in part, to the very beginning of godliness, to come alone from him.* When whatsoever thou art able to do thou doest confess, it is his gift, thou hast received it from him; so that it is not thou that doest it, not thy power, thy strength, but the gift of God alone. Thus *Phil. 4. 12, 13.* when he had mentioned that excellent frame of heart, *That he knew how to abound and how to want; yea, that he could do all things;* he mollifieth this presently, by adding Christ, *He could do all things through Christ that strengthened him.* Here *Paul* doth put forth the life of grace, but the fountain of it is Christ. So again, *1 Cor. 15. 10. I laboured more abundantly then they all, yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me, or in me, exciting of me, and giving me strength to do it.* The trumpet of grace is often in these acknowledgements, *2 Cor. 3. 5. We are not sufficient of our selves to think any thing, as of our selves.*



*selves.* He doth not say to *do*, but not so much as to *think*. And he doth not say, *great things*, or *high things*, but *any thing*: Not the least good thing in his ministerial way, *but our sufficiency is of God*. Therefore to curb the insolency of such proud thoughts, as if we could do any thing of our selves, see with what authority he speaketh, 1 Cor. 4. 7. *Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou, that thou diast not receive?* Therefore the Pelagians and Semi-pelagians of old, these did so set up duty, and their own power therein, that they did take off from Christ and his grace. The former, they held not grace necessary, unless it were for the more easie working, *ad facilius operandum*; but if this were so, then Christ was in vain in respect of any absolute necessity. The latter, they held our endeavours, our desires and groans did go before, and then grace was bestowed upon us to put them into effectual operations: But all this is derogatory to the grace and power of God, who of spiritually dead, makes us to live a supernatural life, being made new creatures, and so act from that principle of life infused into us.

Secondly, *We do exercise our selves in prayer and other Ordinances without any dishonour to the grace and power of Christ, when we attribute no merit, or causality to them.* And this is a step higher than the former. For in Popery, besides Christ they press the necessity of holy works, as merits; but they acknowledge the grace of God, to be the foundation thereof. They say, our faith, our love, our repentance must be the fruits of the Spirit, and the effects of Gods grace; but then they destructively adde, That these do merit eternal life, and by such duties we make compensation to the justice of God. Now you must know, that they plead not for merit in a rude and grosse manner, as if the works flowing from us did deserve a crown of glory, but as we are enabled to them by grace, and thereupon they say, to call the graces we are enabled unto by Christ menstruous cloaths, or dung and drosse, they think to be a manifest injury to God himself. But certainly when *Paul would not be found in the righteousness he had*; And *Abraham and David* were not justified by the works they did, though regenerated persons; This doth fully overthrow all merit, under any distinction whatsoever. Look then thou distinguish between the necessity of the duty, and the merit thereof. See thy self bound to the use of all Ordinances, but attribute no condignity to them to make thee worthy of Gods favour.

Thirdly, *Then we derogate not from Christ, when in the constant exercise of these, we rest onely upon him for our justification.* Though we pray for our selves and others, though we diligently attend to the whole course of godliness, yet in regard of reconciliation with God, and acceptance of our persons, we go out of all to Christ alone; *It hath pleased the Father, that in Christ all fullness should dwell*, Col. 1. 14. Fullness is not to dwell in thy duties or graces, but in Christ. Hence also *Ephes. 1. 6. We are accepted of in the beloved.* It is not then in our own performances, nor in anything that we can do, that we are to look for acceptance. *David*, though living under the Old Testament dispensations, yet saw so much of Gospel-light and Gospel-grace, *That if God entered into judgement with his servant, no flesh could be justified in his sight*, Psalm 143. 2. Doe not then confound sanctification and justification together, which is the continual error in Popery. Be diligent in active righteousness, but rest in passive, viz. that righteousness of Christ imputed to the believer.

Fourthly, *We performe duties and Ordinances without derogation to Christ, when we put no trust or secret confidence in them, but look upon them onely as the signes and evidences of Christs dwelling in us.* We may indeed be much comforted, and rejoyce in the discovering of graces in our hearts: but to

2. When we attribute no merit or causality to the means.

3. When we rest upon Christ onely for our justification.

4. When we put no trust or confidence in the means.

put



put any confidence in them, to rest upon them, as if in them we might stand before God: This is to mistake, and to give to our graces what belongs to Christ; and that Christian must have a discerning spirit, even an Eagles eye, that can difference between comfort from duties, and resting in duties. Then also we put no trust in them, when we are by them lifted up to draw nigh to Christ; when they are to us, what the tree was to *Zacheus*, to raise us up higher, that we may have communion with Christ. If then we look upon our graces, as the testimonies of Gods love, and exercise our selves in duties, as those whereby we draw nigh to Christ himself, then Christ is glorified, not dishonoured by them.

5. We dishonour God in the use of the means, when we think we profit him thereby.

Fifthly, *Then we use spiritual duties oppositely to the honour of God, when we thinke to profit him, or advantage him thereby.* When we have done all, we are to judge our selves unprofitable servants, as to God: God needeth not any of our service; He hath millions of Angels, and thousands of the spirits of just men made perfect, which offer him praise and honour, without the least spot and defilement: So that it is his gracious condescension to accept of our duties: It is his mercy, that he will regard our prayers; They are liker to noisome vapours, than to frankincense, and yet God is pleased to receive them as such. If therefore thou art after all duties exceedingly debased and humbled, saying, Who am I Lord? And what am I, that I should be received into thy presence? and so going from duties, not as giving to God, but receiving from him, not as if thou hadst honoured him, but he had honoured thee, then Christ and duties are well accorded together.

*Use of Instruction.* What subtil and secret refined wayes of sinning the heart of man is guilty of? For whereas all will conclude, that not to pray, not to be diligent in duties, is to oppose Christ, and withstand him; there is a more mystical and undiscerned way of opposing Christ and God, which is by religious duties and Ordinances, when we make them more than means, when we give merit to them, and put any confidence in them. How heavy an aggravation is this, while we pray to God, to provoke God; while we call on Christ, to dishonour Christ? Search out therefore for thy sins, not onely in the open wayes of impiety, but in the paths of holiness. In thy prayers, in the ordinances, look to find out sinnes there, as well as temptations of more dissoluteness. The works of the Law kept men off from Christ, as well as the works of the flesh.



SERM. LXXX.

*The highest in Gifts and Graces, should desire the Prayers of the Meanest : And People ought to Pray for their Ministers, as well as Ministers for their People.*

2 COR. I. II.

*You also helping together by Prayer for us.*

**T**HIS Text you heard, is declarative of the meanes which were to be used by the *Corinthians*, that the mercy *Paul* trusted in God for, might be accomplished. The meanes, that is *Prayer*, but a *labouring Prayer*, and with accord and agreement; yea, such an *helping in Prayer*, as is a debt of service, and ministrations to their spirituall guides. The word *sinōs*, when taken strictly, and distinctly to other words that are also rendred *prayers* and *supplications*; (as some would expound that place, *1 Tim. 2. 1.*) doth signifie *prayer* only in this limited sense, as it is a deprecation against some evill, rather then a petition for some good; and in this sense it may very well be used here. But because we see the Scripture commonly using it in a more large sense, neither will we restraine it in this place. From the former part then of this Verse, there remaine further Doctrines observable. As

First. *Those that are the most eminent in gifts and office, yea and grace also, do need the Prayers of those, who are farre inferior in the Church of God.*

The most eminent in gifts and graces, need the prayers of their inferiours.

No eye in this spirituall body is so perfect, that it may say to the foot, *I have no need of thee*. When the Apostle doth thus desire the Prayers of the *Corinthians*, he doth it not in a complement, neither doth he speak it for modesty and humility sake, but cordially and really, as finding the want of them. Christ indeed being God and Man, though as Man he prayed to God, yet he needed no mans prayer for him; neither did he ever require his Disciples to pray for him, no, not when he was in the greatest agonies. He blamed them indeed for their dullness, and that they could not watch with him one hour; but he did not require their prayers for him. But there is no godly man, though a *Paul*, though never so eminent, but as he is to pray for others; so also he needeth that others should pray for him. Hence you have this eminent Saint often desiring the prayers of others, his interest in God alone will not do it. Though he be a favourite in the Court of Heaven, yet others also must intercede for him. *Job*, *Daniel*, and others, though they be instanced in, as such who can greatly prevaile with God in prayers for others, as if the eare of God were open to them, more than to others, yet they themselves did want the prayers of others



thers for them. And thus we have *Paul* again and again desiring the prayers of others for him, *1 Thes. 1. 17.* when he had delivered many short and excellent Aphorismes, more necessary to the soules health, then those of *Hippocrates* for the body; and having also prayed for them, he requireth the same duty for himself, *Brethren pray for us.* That as the Clouds drop upon the earth to refresh that, and that sends up vapours again, which are congealed into Clouds; thus it should be with Pastors and People, a mutuall and a reciprocal praying for each other, will greatly advantage and promote their spirituall good. Thus the same Apostle, to the same people, *2 Thes. 3. 1.* saith in a concluding way, *Finally, Brethren pray for us.* In the like manner, also *Heb. 13. 18.* he desireth they would pray for him, giving his reason, *because of the good conscience he had in his work;* So that where there is godliness and holiness, we ought to be so farre from neglecting prayer for them, thinking they do not need it, that we are the rather to be encouraged in that service for them. And if you say these instances are of whole Churches, *Paul* may well desire the prayers of Churches Assembled together; but doth he need the prayer of a particular person? Yes; this you will also find, *Phil. 2. 2. I trust, through your prayers, I shall be given to you.* Thus you see the most eminent desiring the prayers of those that are inferiour to them; and there are good grounds for this.

## Reasons.

1. Because there is a more peculiar promise made to the prayers of many then one.

First, *Because there is a more particular promise made of Gods presence and power to many gathered together, than to one;* to the prayers of more then one, as more coales together do the more easily inflame. What *Solomon* saith, of two, that they are better than one, is true also in respect of prayer. You have this notably affirmed by Christ himself, *Matth. 18. 19, 20* *If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall aske, it shall be done for them.* This is so remarkeable, that our Saviour useth that expression, *Again I say to you,* and then giveth the reason, *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them.* By this it is plain, that *vis unita est fortior,* the united force of believers, is stronger then single and alone. Hence our Saviour in his Forme of Prayer directeth to say, *Our Father,* not, *my Father,* because of the Communion the godly have in this duty. Seeing then there is a more peculiar presence of God in the midst of his people Assembled together, then when alone; no wonder if *Paul* desire their prayers. Thus it was in *Peters* case, the whole Church met together to pray for his deliverance; which prayer was so prevalent, that it broke open the Prison doores, and made every thing yield to it. It is mentioned as a speciall priviledge by the *Psalmist* to be vouchsafed to *Solomon*, *Psal. 72. 15. Prayer also shall be made for him.* It is of great consequence to be remembred in the Assembly of the Saints; as on the other side, when the Church following Scripture-Rules have cast some persecuting Emperours out of their Prayers: this hath been the greatest evill that could befall them, a forerunner, that God also would cast them out of his favour. One occasion which made *Licinius* to oppose *Constantine*, was because the Christians in their meeting prayed for *Constantine*, but not for him; though happily he regarded more the dishonour he thought put upon him, than any esteem he had of their Prayers.

2. Because the Church in Scripture is called a body, whose parts stand in need one of another.

Secondly, Another Reason is, *From the similitude, which the Scripture delighteth much in, when it speaketh of the Church of God, that it is a body, and every particular Christian is a Member thereof;* now in any naturall body, though the noble and eminent parts thereof be never so sound and able for their particular operations, yet there is not the most ignoble part in the body, but they want the help thereof, and therefore nourishment is carefully distributed to every part, as having its respective necessity. Thus it is also in the spirituall body, the Church of God; only Christ the head, needeth not the Members,



bers, but they him. As for the rest there is a mutuall help of every part, so that unless *Paul* were not of the body, unless he were not of this spirituall union, he must need the prayers of others. The Communion then that the body hath in this life, is the ground of praying for one another; and that is the reason, why, though we pray for others though alive; yet not when they are dead. It is absurd to pray for such who are deceased, because they are now no longer in this Church-communication. The eye doth not now need the feet, all want is removed, and that visible union of believers in Church-administrations, is now quite dissolved. What else may be added in this particular, shall be suggested in the next.

Only the Use of this is to admonish the most excellent and choicest Christian of *humility and modesty*; though thy gifts and graces, though thy office and place be farre above other private Christians, yet remember thou wantest their prayers. They that cannot help thee by counsell and advice; they that cannot help thee by direction, yet may by prayer. Therefore do nothing that may abate their zeale and love in prayer for thee. It may also teach thee humility in this respect. When thou findest great enlargements, good success in thy Ministry, be not lifted up; as if God did this for any righteousness it may be in thee, but because of other mens prayers; attribute such things to their prayers, rather than thy graces. But we proceed to the second Doctrine, which is,

Use.

Secondly, *That people do owe unto their spiritnall guide, as a debt of service, their earnest prayers for them.*

People ought to pray for their spirituall guides.

Thus much you heard was implied in the Greek word. Those that sow unto you spirituals, are not only to reap of your carnals, but also of your spirituals; you are not to communicate only with him that teacheth you, in your temporall good things but your spirituall also. Thus the Church looked upon it as a duty to make supplications for *Peter*, when he was in Prison; and certainly the spirituall labourer is not only worthy of his wages, but of your heartiest and most fervent prayers; and those people who do neglect this duty, it is a signe that they never get good by the Ministry, nor is it their desire to do so. Hence so much labouring and Preaching becometh so ineffectuall to thee. Thou art the same ignorant and prophane man, as thou wert many years ago. Is not this because thou never rightly prayest to God that the ministry may be blessed to thee. But to enlarge on this, Consider

1. *That it is a wild and absurd opinion of the Socinians, who hold that prayer is only commanded in the New Testament.* That Christ made it a new precept to pray, so that although the godly in the Old Testament did pray, yet they say, they had no command for it. This they make one of the new Evangelicall precepts Christ brought into the Church; but this doth openly contradict Scripture. Doth not the Scripture say, *Call upon me in the time of trouble*; doth not the Old Testament say, *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found*; was not the Temple of God called the *house of prayer*? doth not *Solomon* in the Dedication of his Temple, suppose that its a peoples duty under judgments to pray and humble themselves under Gods hand, that so they may be removed from off them. It was therefore alwayes a duty both in the Old and New Testament to pray to God.

Considerations explaining the truth. 1. 'Tis an error of the Socinians to say, God commands prayer only in the New Testament.

2. *Though prayer be the meanes whereby God accomplisheth great things for his people, yet we must not put any merit or confidence in our prayers.* To be proud of thy prayers, is a great absurdity; for thy prayer to God doth testifie that thou art nothing, that thou canst do nothing: for if thou canst do things of thy selfe, why needest thou pray? That is the reason, the Socinians

2. No merit or confidence to be put in our prayers.

A a a

give



give, why in the Old Testament, there needed no precept of prayer, because there was then nothing promised; but they were able to fullfill the condition thereof by their own power. But the foundation of that is rotten, for they had the same spirituall things promised only more obscurely, that we have; and were no wayes of themselves to performe their conditions: otherwise we will grant that what a man can do of his own power independently upon God, he needeth not pray for it; but there is nothing wherin man doth not need the gift of God, whether for temporall, or necessary things: and seeing the way to have it is only by prayer, this exalteth God, and debaseth man, so that it is a contradiction to the duty in hand, when we rest upon our prayers, as if the beggar should be proud from his asking of almes.

3. Ministers are to pray for their people, and people for their Ministers.

3. *The duty of prayer is reciprocall; Ministers are to pray for their People, and People for their Ministers.* This Paul who so often desireth the Churches prayers, doth as often demonstrate his continuall and fervent prayers for them; yea, though a people be never so unworthy, so wretched and malicious, yet they will say with *Samuell*, *God forbid I should cease to pray for you*; so that thy prayers for those who labour in the work of the Lord, are not in vain. They are recompenced with prayers again, and never are people a blessing and comfort to a Minister, nor is a Minister a blessing to them, till there be this mutuall praying; for if the prayer of one man doth prevaile much, how much then will the prayers of many righteous persons for each other? So that we see why the Devill and his instruments are so busie in sowing of discords and contentions between Pastor and People; why instead of praying for one another, there are slanderings, detractions, and malicious oppositions of one another: for by this discord the Devils Kingdome is promoted, and their prayers for one another are hindred.

4. This supposeth the people to be both gifted and gracious.

4. When we say, *That its a debt which people owe, to pray for their spirituall guides*; this supposeth that the people whom he watch over, should be both a gifted and a gracious people. Gifted, Such who are able to make their requests known to God, and that with others, as well as alone; for how can it be expected, that he who cannot pray for himself, will ever pray for the Minister? Would it not be very ridiculous to desire the prayers of many, who live under our continuall teaching. Pray, Alas they never prayed in their lives. They never pray for themselves, or for others. But gifts without grace, are like a tinckling Cymball: God will not hear the prayers of wicked men. Therefore our people ought to be gracious as well as gifted. They must have pure hearts, and pure hands: how uncomely are holy prayers in an unholy mouth? There must be no dead flye in this precious box of Oyntment. Oh then that our Congregations were awakned to be such a people, that can discharge spirituall duties to a spirituall overseer! Do you by your prayers help on the work of their ministry; for our Preaching alone, without your effectuall praying, will not have its blessed effect.

5. Many things there are which people are to desire of God for their Minister.

1. That they may be preserved.

2. That their word may be successfull.

5. *There are many particulars in which your soules are to be emptyed in prayer for them, for their preservation and safety.* As here Paul prayeth for their workes sake; they are exposed to the hatred and rage of man; if the shepheard be scattered, the sheep will quickly flye: now because their calling is to remove the sinnes of people, to set the Kingdome of Christ in the place where they live; therefore none meet with more absurd and unreasonable adversaries then they do: for this Paul desireth their prayers, *2 Thes. 3. 2. That he might be delivered from unreasonable men.*

2. You are to pray for them in this particular also, that their Ministry may be successfull. That the word they Preach may find roome in the hearts of the people. As it is the Ministers duty to give himself to study, and to seeke out fit words, that may be as so many Nails fastned by the Master of the Assemblies; so



so it is your duty to be as diligent in prayer for a blessing upon it. That to your selves, to your families, to your neighbours, it may be a quickning and converting word. Thus *Paul* in that forementioned place, pray for us, that the Gospel may have a free course, and be glorified. Oh what auditor doth his duty in this respect? thou complaineest of the dullness and frowardness of people; how much good seed falleth upon stony ground? see if thy soul may not be charged with negligence herein; hadst thou prayed more earnestly; hadst thou sought the Lord more; there might have been a more plentiful harvest. When the Ministers faithfull Preaching, and the Peoples fervent Prayer go together, then Satan will fall like lightning before them.

3. You are to Pray for their *qualifications*, that their gifts and graces may be quickned. That they may be filled with boldness, and the spirit of power, not fearing man, or sinfully pleasing him. It is a very hard thing to be qualified with all abilities and graces for the ministeriall employment, who is sufficient for these things? and the work we have to do is displeasing and distrustfull to all naturall men. Now how difficultly can men subject to weakneses and infirmities do such angelicall work? Thus *Paul* himself, who professed he dyed daily, and attained to such a measure of grace, as to bid others follow him, yet see the reason, *Eph. 6. 20, 21.* why he desireth the *Ephesians* to pray for him, viz. that I may open my mouth boldly, that I may speak boldly as I ought to speak.

3. That their gifts and graces may be quickned.

Lastly, You are to pray even for their *salvation*, for their office being so great, and they standing accountable for their own and the peoples soules, their salvation is the more improbable. *Chrysostome* speaketh very sadly to this point, as if very few Ministers would be saved, because of their office; however we find *Paul* awing his heart with this, and keeping down his body, using all meanes to suppress the very beginning of sin, *1 Cor. 9. 17.* lest when he had Preached to others, he himself might be a cast-away. These offices in the Church, though some do ambitiously intrude into them, looking for glory and advantage thereby; yet such, who consider the difficulty of the office, the necessary qualifications and due administrations thereof, do tremble under it; and like *Moses* and *Jeremy* are affraid to take such an office upon them; but men whose spirits are hardy and confident, matter not the danger thereof. As you see in great high Buildings, how Masons and other Artificers can stand upon an high Pinacle, and their head never be giddy, nor have any feare, but those who are not accustomed to that way, do exceedingly tremble; thus men, who are accustomed to high thoughts of themselves, that have great confidence of their own abilities, they can work on these Battlements, and their heads never go round; whereas men of deep modesty and humility, are afraid to climbe so high.

4. That they may be saved.

*Use of Admonition*, to our people generally, how greatly is this duty neglected? how many instead of praying for them, curse and revile them? but no wonder at this, seeing many never pray for themselves, they never pray, nor their families pray, and then how can you help us by your prayers? Let this particular move thee, that by prayer for a blessing upon our Ministeriall labours, thou wilt find the benefit redound upon thy own soul. It will be a quickning ministry to thee, whatever it be to others, to thee it will be soul-saving. Do you pray that your corporall bread may nourish your body? and will you not much rather, that your spirituall bread may be the bread of life to you? All lyeth not in hearing, writing, and repeating, but add to these effectuell prayers.





## SERM. LXXXI.

*How, and why we should praise God for all his Mercies vouchsafed to us.*

2 COR. I. II.

*That for the gift bestowed upon us by meanes of many persons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf.*

**T**His latter part of the Verse, containeth the reason or finall cause of his request, for the unanimous publick paryers of the Corinthians. viz. *That as by the prayers of many, his deliverance hath been obtained; so also by them publick praises and thanksgivings may be given to God in his behalf.*

The sense of the words is very plaine and clear, only the Grammaticall Construction hath caused great variety of Interpretations; I shall indeavour to clear every obscurity, as it cometh in order.

In the words there is,

1. The end it self, and that is, *that thanks may be given.*
2. The Object matter for which, and that is called *χαρισμα*, the gift. viz. of deliverance from that great death.
3. The Subject by whom this gift is obtained, and that is by *many.*
4. The Persons who are to give thanks, and that is also *many*, *διὰ πολλῶν*, And

Lastly, In whose behalf; and that *on our behalf.*

Let us take these parts of division, as they come in order. And

First, We meet with the finall cause, *That thanks may be given*, *ευχαριστήσῃ*, it is in the passive sense, and therefore noted to be an unusuall and a very rare phrase, it being every where else used actively. Observe

Whensoever we have received mercies from God, we are by praise and thankfulness to acknowledge then to him.

*That when by prayers we have obtained mercy, it is our duties by praises and thankfulness to acknowledge the same to God.*

Prayer must not be alone, when it hath prevailed with God like *Castor* and *Pollux*; prayer and praises must go together, *Phil. 4. 6. In every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.* Here you see *supplication* and *thanksgiving* must go hand in hand. Its no less Gods command to praise him for mercies, then to pray to him; and this truth is the more to be pressed, because of our horrible negligence herein. In our distresses, in our exigences, we call and cry unto the Lord, but in our mercies and deliverances we forget him, and do not own the Author of our favours and benefits. This is notably represented in that History *Luke 17. 17, 18.* Where of ten Lepers that were cleansed, there was but one did returne and give glory to God by thanksgiving, and he was a Samaritan also. So that those from whom it was expected, did neglect this duty. We see by this how backward



ward we are to praise God, though very forward and earnest to pray to him in our miseries. Those nine Lepers that regarded not to praise God, yet they lifted up their voices and said, *Jesus, Master, have mercy on us*; and thus while we are in any exigences, then our hearts are very hot and lively. Then we cry and pray, *Lord hear us, our trouble is great*; but if the Lord do vouchsafe his mercy to us, then God may say, where is the man, where is the woman that was cleansed, that was healed, that had this or that mercy and deliverance, for they have not returned to glorifie me. It is love to our selves; it's a self-seeking that makes us pray, but it would argue love to God, and an honouring of him, when we returne praises to him. It is therefore the duties of Ministers to preis you upon the duty of praising of God, as well as of praying unto him. Many are horribly negligent in both, some are more often in prayer, then they are in thanksgiving. Whereas God is said to inhabit the praises of his people, Psalm 22. 3. as well as he is the God that heareth prayers, Psalm 65. 2. *God dwelleth in the praises of Israel*, that is, in or amongst Israel continually praising of him; or else it is to shew, that as a man dwelleth in his house constantly residing there; so God is daily administering matter of praises to his people; implying thereby, that there is no time, no place, no condition, wherein we ought not to bless and praise God. Those many Psalmes which David made, declare how necessary a duty it is, and how much the people of God are to exercise themselves therein. Hence it is that David professeth he will never intermit this duty; as we are to pray without ceasing, so to praise God without ceasing, Psalm 145. 1, 2. *I will bless thy name for ever and ever; I will bless thee every day*: See what an ardent affection David hath to this. For although the Apostle James saith, *Is any man afflicted let him pray, is any man merry let him sing Psalmes*, James 5. 13. implying thereby, that there are speciall times wherein one duty is to be exercised, more than another: yet there is no time wherein the Lord doth not give his people occasion to give thanks to him.

That your hearts may be both rightly instructed in the manner of this duty, and awed against all slothfulness therein, take notice of these ensuing particulars.

1. What is required to this Duty. And

2. The Motives thereunto. And

First, *To praise God, there is required an acknowledgement by faith, that God, and God alone, is the Author of all the mercies, both temporall and spirituall, that we do enjoy.* Hence an Atheist can never be thankfull, because he owneth no God, the giver of mercies: And the practicall Atheist, who liveth as if there were no God; he like the Swine, eateth indeed upon the fruit that he findeth upon the ground, but never looketh up to the tree from whence it falleth. Now this practicall Atheisme doth raige every where, and that causeth the universall ingratitude that is in the world: men take these mercies as so many debts belonging to them. They look upon them as the things of a naturall course, not as the dispensations of a free and voluntary Agent; even the great God who giveth them, and denyeth them at his pleasure. David therefore in his Psalmes, doth so often magnifie God by many glorious Titles, thereby professing, that *From God cometh every good and perfect gift.* Hence also the Apostle James, Cap. 4. 15. maketh it the duty of every one in their daily resolutions, to buy and sell, or to go to such a place, to say, *if the Lord will*; declaring hereby, that it is from God that we are enabled to performe any naturall or civill action. I also add, that it must be an acknowledgement of God alone, because in spirituall mercies many corrupt Teachers have divided the kingdome between Gods gracious power and mans mans free-will. Therefore the Papists, the Socinians, the Arminians, these do either in whole or in

What is required to the praising of God.

1. An acknowledgement that God alone is the Author of all our mercies.

part



part destroy the very foundation of thanksgiving to God, in respect of spirituall mercies; especially in that whereby one man differs from another. That which the Apostle doth so evidently attribute to God only, 1 Cor. 4. 7. that they appropriate to themselves the good use of free-will, or the improving of grace offered, is made mans work; and then certainly we are to glory more in our selves then in God. But if we are to give God thanks for every morsell of bread we eate; shall we not much rather for every spirituall mercy to the soul? It was *Tullies* observation, that though their Ancestors praised God for their prosperity and success, yet they never did for their vertuous actions, thinking that absurd, as if unless they were not done by their own power, there was no commendation due to them; and too much of this Heathenish and Philosophicall leaven doth still soure the minds of many Learned men in the Church. Know then, so much as thou settest up a free-will beyond Scripture bounds, so farre thou takest off from the duty of praising and blessing of God. Besides we say, God must be acknowledged in every mercy, *temporall* and *spirituall*. Thou that prayest God would give thee thy daily bread, wilt thou not praise God when he doth it? yet how sottish and brutish are many persons and Families, when they go to meales, and rise from meales, and no thanks or praises are given to God, should not the example of Christ move thee? when he had but some loaves of Barly and a little Fish; yet he blessed God, before he did eate thereof. How then cometh it about, that there should be such unthankfull wretches that take their food, and yet never thank God that giveth it? Thou wouldst account that poore man a proud or unworthy person, to whom thou shouldst give some food in his necessity, and he never so much as open his mouth to give one word of thankfulness to thee. Thou dealest more frowardly and wickedly with God. And if for temporall mercies, then much more for spirituall; if thy meate, thy drink, thy rayment, be Gods mercy, much more is thy regeneration, thy justification, which do so far transcend the power of nature.

2. Both the  
generall and  
particular acts  
of faith.

2. To this duty of praising God, is not only required *These generall acts of faith whereby we own him for the Jehovah, and the Creator of Heaven and Earth; but also those particular Acts, whereby we do apply and appropriate him as our God in particular.* For it is this particular applying Act of faith that maketh the heart full of praise and thanksgiving. Therefore you may observe *David* in his Psalmes, not only calling God a buckler, a refuge, a strong tower, but his buckler, his strong tower, his God. Neither can we be thankfull in spirituall mercies, about pardon of sinne, support in temptations, till with *Paul*, Gal. 2, we say, *Who loved us, and gave himself for us*; and this is one reason why we urge the People to take heed of diffidence, not to give way to distrust and doubtfull perplexities of soul, because while these are predominant, they cannot walk thankfully and give the glory, that is due, to him.

3. Love to  
God.

3. Love to God, Because he heareth our prayers, will raise up the heart exceedingly to thanksgiving, *Psal. 116. 1. I will love the Lord, because he hath heard my supplications.* That God should hear the prayers of one so unworthy and polluted as thou art; that God should do thee good, who art so evil; this freeness of his love, this riches of his grace should exceedingly melt thee; it should be like fire that assimilateth every thing into its self: now when this love, like so many coales of fire is in thy breast, it cannot be, but that it will open thy heart, and thy mouth wide to praise the Lord. This is our corruption, we love the mercy it self, but not God that giveth it; we delight in the comforts that are bestowed upon us, but do not rejoyce in God from whence they come. If therefore thou findest thy heart frozen and dull; thou canst not raise it up to bless God; meditate much upon the love of God to thee, so vile and unworthy.

4. An



4. *An heavenly heart* is necessary to bless and praise God. The praising of God is Angels works, and the employment of the glorified Saints to all eternity. *Praise is comely*, but it is from clean hearts and clean mouths. We need the Spirit of God to enable us to thanksgiving, as well as to prayer. *Psal. 119. 7. I'll praise thee with uprightness.* An hypocrite who giveth God glory by his mouth, but reproacheth him by his life, not only his prayer, but his praises are abominable. Hence *Psal. 50. ult.* it is said, *Who so offereth praise, glorifieth God.* But lest you should extend this to every man; See what is added, *And who so ordereth his conversation aright; &c.* If a man praise God in never so melodious a tune, but then there is no harmony, nor order in his life, this is a reproach to God. We may *benedicere lingua*, when we do *maledicere vita*. There is a real praising of God by exercised holiness, as well as verbal by the tongue. In the Sacrifices of thanksgiving, *Levit. 7. 10.* Whosoever did eat thereof, that had uncleanness upon him, he was to be cut off. By this is typified, how unpleasing the praises of such are, who live in their sins; it is as uncomely, as a pearl in the Swines mouth. It is true, God doth greatly condescend to accept of our praises; for he hath millions and millions of Angels continually praising of him, who have not the least blemish or spot upon them: but yet he is pleased to take this Sacrifice at our hands. In the Sacrifice of thanksgiving, *Levit. 7. 13.* there was leaven allowed. *Junius* observeth, That whereas God allowed leaven in no other Sacrifice (though *Bonfrerius* thinketh otherwise, and that leaven only was forbidden so farre as to be offered, but the common opinion is otherwise) why then was leaven allowed only in this Sacrifice? Hereby to teach us (saith *Junius*) that there is corruption and sinfulness in our best actions, and that we need the righteousness of Christ, that they be accepted of. Even then in our praises there is matter of humiliation, there is some bitterness, yet through Christ we are accepted of. But though all pollution cannot be purged out, yet he that liveth in a wilfull way of sinning, cannot give glory to God acceptably.

4. Heavenly mindedness.

5. He that praiseth God, must do it *voluntarily, readily, cheerfully*, otherwise it is not worthy the name of praise. As God loveth a *cheerfull giver*, so especially a *thanksgiver*. To praise God with an heavy, lumpish, unwilling heart, is a contradiction to the duty in thy hand; it is as if we should say, a black Sun, or a cold fire. *Lev. 22. 29, 30.* The Law about a Sacrifice of thanksgiving is that when they offer it, it must be *at their own will*, which argueth the readiness and willingness that ought to be in us at that time; and then on the same day it was to be offered, they were to eat it all up, to leave none till the morrow, whereas in other Sacrifices they might. And this was to shew, that he who would give thanks to God, he must do it speedily, he must not delay, or put off. So that by this you see a praising frame of heart requireth a most curious, exact tempera-  
ture. It's that Apothecaries ointment which belonged to the Highpriest, onely made up of choice ingredients. A sinfull heart cannot praise God, and a worldly heart cannot praise God, that wants wheels to its chariots, wings to flie up with. The Lark listeth her self off from the earth, ere she begins to sing. And then a sorrowfull dejected heart, that cannot praise God, no more than a string in the instrument too much wetted, can cause a melodious sound.

5. Cheerfulness.

In the next place, Let us consider the encouragements thereunto. And

1. *The excellency of this duty is apparent, in that the heart is naturally so forward and opposite to it.* It may cause some wonder, why the soul of a man should be slow to this work; and commonly all are more in petitions, then in thanksgivings. Hence *David, Psal. 103.* though a man more exercised in this service, than any one, called therefore *the sweet singer of Israel*, and who is not contented himself to praise God, but calls upon all the creatures in Heaven and earth, yea the most inconsiderable ones to *praise God*; yet he finds some listlessness and slothfulness in himself, see therefore how he prepareth and stirreth up himself, as the Cock doth before his crow, *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and let all within thee praise his*

Motives to praise God.

1. 'Tis an excellent duty, in that we are so backward to it.

his



his holy name. His heart doth need calling upon, his soul must be moved and quickned ere it doth his duty. Conclude then certainly this duty is most excellent, it is very pleasing to God, because I am so backward, I am never scarce in a praising temper, one clog or other is upon me.

2. It is called a Sacrifice.

2. Consider, *That the Scripture vouchsafeth it the name of a Sacrifice*, Heb. 13. 15. Where you have the duty commanded, the time when, and the manner how, *Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God, and that continually. As David said, Seven times a day will I praise thee*, Pl. 119. 164. It is a sacrifice, and every sacrifice must have fire; there must be zeal and fervency; but by whom must we offer it? It is by Christ; so that he is the Altar upon which the incense of prayers and praises are to be offered to God. By him we have both power and acceptance to praise God; and in this sense all the people of God are called Priests, and they have the sacrifices of praise continually to offer up unto God. Hence to praise God, is expressed *Hof. 14. 2. by rendring the calves of our lips.*

3. 'Tis a debt due to God.

3. *It is a debt that is due to God.* He that hath commanded thee to pray to him, hath also enjoyned thee to praise him. Yea this is all that God looketh for; Thou canst not satisfie God for thy sins committed, thou art not able to repair his honour and glory shouldst thou be damned a thousand times over, yet it could not recompence to God according to what thou hast dishonoured him. Therefore seeing this is the only debt God obligeth unto, why should we not be more diligent in it? If he had required some greater service of us, and more terrible to flesh and blood, ought we not to have done it?

4. The chief motive is thankfulness.

4. *One chief motive, which is to put us upon all holy obedience unto God, is, Thankfulness.* There are two great and principal parts of Divinity, the one is, *De gratia Dei*, of the grace of God, and the other, *De gratitudine hominis*, of mans thankfulness. There are indeed several reasons why we are commanded to abound in holy works, but one of them is thereby to testify our thankfulness to God, that though we cannot do anything to merit at his hands, though Christ as Mediator hath purchased all spiritual priviledges; so that we cannot do any holy duty, as a cause to procure them; yet to manifest our thankfulness to God, we are ready with delight to do his will.

5. A thankfull heart is the most proper disposition to Gospel dispensations.

5. *A thanksgiving heart is the most proper and suitable disposition to the Gospel dispensation; wherein grace doth in so many wonderfull effects demonstrate it self.* Now praise doth properly answer to free grace and love, *Eph. 1. 16.* Gods predetermination and his adoption, it is, *That we should be to the praise of the glory of his grace.* These new songs should alwayes be in our mouths. And again, *v. 12. That we should be to the praise of his glory.* So that if you say, Why did God predestinate thee? It is to his praise. Why doth he convert? It is to his praise. Thus he adopts, he justifieth, that we might be only to his praise. Thus *1 Pet. 2. 9.* we are a *chosen generation, a peculiar people, that we should shew forth his praises.* The children then of free grace, must be the children of praises and thanksgivings unto God. Every power of the soul, every part of the body should be a tongue (as it were) to glorifie God. Were we more affected with the depth, breadth and length of this grace of God, we should be more abounding in this duty of blessing God. *David* calls his tongue, his glory (though some apply it to the soul) because of this work.

6. The neglect of this duty is an argument of a rotten heart.

Lastly, *If we praise not God when mercies are obtained by prayer, it discovereth a rotten and insincere heart.* It argued thou never didst pray for mercies upon right grounds to glorifie God, to be thereby more instrumental in our service of him, but only for our own ends, and our own necessities. For he that prayeth spiritually, will praise God cheerfully; he will more rejoyce in the favour of God, because God heareth his prayers, then the benefit obtained. If then thou neglectest this duty of thanksgiving, thou discoverest a prophane earthly heart, that thou preferrest the mercy desired above the glory and honour of God; and therefore it will be just with God, never to hear thy prayers more. For thankfulness is the only way to preserve mercies, and to have more added.





## SERM. LXXXII.

*God is the fountain of all our Mercies, they are his Gifts, and why.*

2 COR. I. II.

*That for the gift bestowed upon us.*

**T**He second part in order to be treated of, is, The Object matter for which, or that for which Paul would have solemn thanksgiving after such solemn prayer. *The gift bestowed upon us, χάρισμα*, This temporal deliverance he calleth *χάρισμα*, because it came from the favour of God, not from any merits or deserts in Paul. Some make a difference between *χάρισμα* and *χάρις*, as if *χάρισμα* was applied onely to the common gifts of Gods Spirit, especially those which Divines call *Dona ministrantia*, Gifts of service; and the Schools, *Gratia gratis data*, and *χάρις*, to the grace and favour of God in a special manner; or to the effect thereof, which is inherent grace in the soul. These graces are called *Dona sanctificantia*, Gifts that do truly sanctifie those that have them. The Scholes falsely call them, *Gratia gratum facientes*. But though *χάρισμα* be often applied to such common spirituall gifts, as 1 Cor. 12. & alibi: Yet sometimes we must thereby understand *sanctifying grace*, and *justifying grace*, Rom. 5. 16. Rom. 11. 28. And indeed, if we will make any difference, it seemeth to be this rather, that *χάρισμα* is the Effect, and *χάρις*, the Cause, as Rom. 12. 6. *Having gifts according to the grace that is given to us*. Hence it is that *χάρισμα* is generally translated gift, in the New Testament. So Favorinus *χάρισμα, δωρον*. So that what the Scripture other where calleth *don*, or *dwon*, or *δωγμα*, Jac. 1. 17. Act. 8. 21. Psal. 1. 17. it may be the same with *χάρισμα*; onely it doth properly signifie such a gift, as maketh to the publick and spiritual advantage of the Church; onely in this Text it may have the general signification, and the special. The general, Paul's Deliverance was a temporal gift. It was a mercy in these outward things, a preservation from death, either violent, as the common exposition (you heard) is, or from natural. For Baldwin the Lutheran Expositor, thinketh it may well enough be understood of some desperate sickness Paul was afflicted with. Howsoever this outward mercy of preservation is called *χάρισμα*, and it may have also the special signification of a common gift advancing the Church of God spiritually. Paul's life and preservation was a gift in this sense: for hereby his ministerial labours might be more successfull. But this latter consideration will come in, in the close of this verse.

Let us take notice of the general one, Paul's life and preservation, it is a gift. From whence observe,

*That not onely spiritual mercies which are above natural causes, but even our ordinary temporal enjoyments, are the gift of God.*

B b b

Our ordinary temporal enjoyments are the gifts of God.

It's



It's not Gods gift onely to sanctifie us, to justifie us, but to give us our health, our food, our preservation; so that we live wholly upon the meer bounty of God; we are all so many Almes-men; the world is an Almes-house. Man doth not, or cannot obtaine the least mercy with his owne wisdom and power, without the blessing of God. This is a necessary truth. For we look more upon these ordinary mercies, as the fruit of our own labour, than as Gods meer free gift. The Apostle *1 Jam. 1. 17.* saith, *Every good gift is from God. Every gift, whether natural or supernatural; what have we, that we have not received,* is true both in nature and grace. For although in the sense that *Pelagians* did, it was very erroneous to confound Creation and Nature, with grace; yet in this respect we may say, That Creation and Preservation is of the grace and favour of God, because he communicated of his goodnesse to the creature onely from his meer favour. But to speake after the Scripture-language; onely those spiritual favours and Church-priviledges, which conduce to eternal blessednesse, are called, *The grace of God.* So that health, life, and other mercies, though they be *The gifts of God,* yet are not called, *The grace of God.* However they both agree in this, our temporal mercies, and spiritual mercies come from God the fountain of them, though spiritual mercies have a more special and restrained consideration.

To affect us with humility and thankfulness in this point, consider these particulars.

1. The effects of natural causes, are still the gift of God.

First, *That even those mercies which are the effects of natural causes, yet they are the gift of God.* Should he withdraw his concurrence, no creature were able to performe its usefull operations. The fire would not warme us, our bread would not nourish us, our raiment would not comfort us against the cold. So that we are not only to bleſs God that we have such creatures as these are, but that they are usefull. We are not only to praise God that we have bread and raiment, but that these things can do their office. For in these there is a two-fold mercy,

1. That God doth provide them for us.

2. That when they are provided, they put forth their usefulness. Thus our Saviour alledgeth out of *Deuteronomy, Mat. 4. 4.* *Thou shalt not live by bread onely, but by every word that proceedeth out of Gods mouth.* If God give not a word of blessing, our bread cannot nourish us. Hence we are also said, *In God to live, and move, and have our being; Act. 17. 28.* Although therefore there are natural causes, and these do produce their effects from a natural necessity, yet because they are second causes, they do therefore depend upon God the chiefest and supream cause both in *esse* and *operari*, in their being and operation. Thus the fire would not burn, if God should not give concurrence thereunto, as appeareth in the case of the three *Worthies*: and the reason which is given by the *Dominicans* (though the *Jesuites* do not well relish it) is that every second cause, though it be a natural agent, and so determined to operation, yet because it is in a potentiality to worke, it hath a *potentia*, a power; this must be reduced to act, by that which is the pure and chief act, *viz.* God himself. So that it is not enough for God to give a natural power to produce such an effect, unlesse he also actuate that power, and goe along with it. This is a truth, and when believed, will draw off our eyes from the creature more, so as to set them upon God, and to acknowledge him more in all things. This then thou art to know, That even those natural comforts, which flow from natural causes, so that it would be a miracle, if they should not produce them, are yet from the goodnesse and bounty of God. Now how often are we unthankfull for these mercies? we doe not bleſse God



for the gift of seeing, the gift of hearing, the gift of walking.

Secondly, *Those comforts which flow from moral causes, these also are to be attributed to the gift of God.* A man that is diligent in his place, he may grow to be rich. The strongest usually prevail in battel. The swiftest they overcome in a race; yet where these moral causes are, the effect is Gods gift. Therefore Solomon observeth, that the clean contrary falleth out sometimes, *Eccles. 9. 11. That the battel is not to the strong, nor the race to the swift.* How many are diligent, carefull and wise in their places, and yet cannot obtain wealth in this world? So that even those things which are brought about by the means that we use, we must acknowledge they are Gods gift; if his blessing be not upon the means, they are frustrated. Thus the Lord doth instruct *Israel* against any pride and confidence that might arise, as if their power and strength did make them rich; *For it is the Lord* (saith he) *that giveth thee power to get wealth,* Deut. 8. 18. You see whatsoever wisdom, diligence, and good husbandry we use, yet if any thing come thereby, it is the gift of God. You have a most significant place for this truth, *Hag. 1. 6.* where the Prophet sheweth, whatever we eat, or drinke, or take care and labour about, the Lord can blast it, and make it come to nothing, *Ye eat, but have not enough, ye cloathe you, but there is none warme, and he that earneth wages, it is to put in a bag with holes.* Doth not this Text evidently proclaim, that the labourer in his wages, the tradesman in his buying and selling, the husbandman in his plowing and sowing cannot adde one farthing to his estate, unlesse the Lord blesse it?

2. The comforts that flow from moral causes, are still the gifts of God.

Thirdly, *All those comforts we have, and gifts, either to relieve or refresh us, that we have from others, we are to account them Gods gifts rather than mens.* If any man help thee in thy necessities; if any man preferre and honour thee, thou art indeed to be thankfull unto men that are benefactors, but more to God who inclined their hearts to thee: Yet how little is this thought upon, when we receive courtesies from men, kindnesses from men? we look upon these alone: whereas if God did not move their hearts, thou wouldst have found no relief from them. It was thus with *Joseph*, he was cast into prison upon the Kings displeasure, in all outward appearance the Goaler would have used him with all cruelty; yet saith the Text, *Genes. 39. 21. God shewed mercy to Joseph, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.* The Lord hath a command over mens hearts; he maketh them mercifull and free to some; and again he turneth the hearts of some men against others. Now we poor creatures look only upon men, as if they did all, as if all were in their power. But as God commanded *Laban*, who was in a rage against *Jacob*, not to speak an ill word against him: So also doth the Lord daily, he maketh men thy friends, and he raiseth them up to be foes. We have likewise a notable instance, *Exod. 12. 36.* when the *Israelites* were upon their departure, the *Egyptians* though their cruel enemies, who hated and oppressed them, yet it's said, *The Lord gave them favour in their eyes, that they lent them even jewels of gold and silver.* On the contrary, when God was provoked, it is said, *Psalms. 105. He turned their heart to his people.* As *David* then said, when *Shimei* reviled him bitterly, *The Lord hath bid him:* So when thou receivest any favour, any mercy from men, look up higher than men, The Lord hath bid him. Mens gifts are much rather Gods gifts: yea even what those do for us, who are in the most indeared relations, and so have principles of nature to instigate them to help thee, yet thou art to look upon all their care and love as Gods gift to thee. If thy parents have taken care of thee; if they have provided for thee; if they have looked to thee; though it was their duty, and they would have been unnatural, if they had done otherwise, yet do thou look

3. What we receive from men, 'tis still the gift of God.



upon it, as Gods gift to thee. How many parents are given up to unnatural affections? How many love their lusts and their whores more than their children? So that spending all upon their pleasures, they regard not their children, but leave them in poverty and misery. Now it's Gods gift to thee informing of thy parents heart to their duties concerning thee. Thus if wives love husbands, love children, all this is Gods gift. Gerson relates of his parents, who desired to instruct him in this, that he had all things from God as a gift, that they made an Engine, whereby descended from above whatsoever he desired, or cried for, as if it came from God immediately.

4. Whatsoever we have by the art and skill of others.

Fourthly, *Even those things that are brought about for us, by the art and skill of others, as well as their bounty, we are to acknowledge God the giver of them.* Thus if Physicians by their art and skill have been a means to recover thee out of any disease, thou art to confess it Gods gift. It was Asa his great sinne, *That he relied on the Physician in his disease, more than on God.* And men think themselves bound to reward the Physician, to see he hath his fee; but how little do they think to glorifie God, and to give him the praises due to his name? It is the midwives care and skill that brings the child into the world: yet we have David taking notice of God, as if he alone had done it, *Psal. 22. 9. Thou art he that took me from my mothers womb; Thou art my God from my mothers belly.* Oh how thankfully, how humbly should we live did we consider how we are compassed about with Gods gifts? Every thing we enjoy is the gift of God.

5. Such things as come upon us without our care.

Lastly, *If all these things, that yet seem to be the proper effects of second causes, are yet the gifts of God, Then how much more are all those enjoyments, wherein mans wisdom and power cannot claim any worke at all?* Such are now all those favours of God in a temporal way, that are cast upon us without any care or providence of ours. That as God provided a wife for Adam, while he was in a sleep; Thus doth the Lord bring about many providences of love for his children, that they never thought of, that they could not in the least manner imagine. To this head we may referre Paul's mercy in the Text. It might well be called a gift, because he was pressed above strength, and had no hope of life, yet even then God did deliver him. Such mercies also must needs be Gods gifts, which are bestowed upon us while we are asleep, while all the senses are locked up; our preservation then from outward dangers, yea, and from many other wayes, which might be our death or ruine, when we have no use of reason to prevent them, they must needs be Gods gift. And lastly, All the providences of God to us, while little children, having no wit or power to help our selves, but exposed to danger every way, all these were the gifts of God. But who doth with thankfulness remember and meditate upon Gods mercies to him, while a little child, when he did eat, and drink, and play, and thought of no God, yet even then did God vouchsafe mercy to him? David did acknowledge this, *Psal. 22. 9. Thou didst make me hope, when I was upon my mothers breasts.* David was a sucking child then, he could not put forth the actings of hope, or any grace at that time, but [I] meaneth God was he that did then support and preserve him, though he did not know of it. Thus you see, that if you let your thoughts runne over all the good things you enjoy, let them come in what channel they can, yet they are all gifts from God. So that we are to overlook all natural causes, all means, all men, all our own wisdom, and labour, and take them from Gods hand alone. That which David saith in reference to the creatures, belongeth also to man, *Psal. 104. 27. These all wait upon thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season; That thou givest them, they gather; thou openest thy hand, and they are filled.*

Now



Now the grounds why they are Gods gifts are,

First, *Because there is no necessity upon God, either natural or moral to vouchsafe them to thee. He is not bound to give thee life, senses, wealth, there is no natural necessity, for he made thee out of his meer good pleasure, and he made thee a man, whereas thou mightst have been a Toad or a Serpent. Nor was there any moral necessity; thou dost not deserve any thing at Gods hand; thou dost not deserve a morsel of bread, nor a drop of water; therefore all is the meer gift of God. It is his free gift, God doth it purely out of his love, according to that saying, *αγαπῶν χάριν*, Favours are to be free and naked, not dissembled and counterfeited. Thus God having nothing from thee to move him, doth it from himself alone.*

Secondly, It's Gods gift, *Because thy sins are such, that he is provoked to blast all thy comforts, to continue them no longer to thee. As God threatens, Hos. 2. 8, 9. I will take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof. You see God calleth it his corn, and his wine, because he giveth it. Thus all thy mercies are Gods gifts upon a two-fold account, both because he gave them at first; and also because he continueth them still unto thee, notwithstanding thy unworthiness.*

Thirdly, They are Gods gifts, *Because we are commended to pray unto him for them. In that short summe of Petitions our Lord remembers this, when he directs us, To pray for our daily bread; and this the rich man must do as well as the poor; a Dives that hath his barns full, as well as a Lazarus that wants crums. If then we pray to God for it, it is plain, that it is his gift.*

*Use of Exhortation.* Are all the comforts we enjoy, Gods gifts? Then walk more thankfully; Think of God more; do not mind second causes and instruments so much. David, Psal. 27. 10. saith, *When his father and mother forsook him, then the Lord will take him up.* David's parents did not forsake him, but he compareth himself to a little Infant, exposed as Moses was, and God did take him up to provide for him. Thus we are to regard God more than father or mother. Labour to speak the language of Scripture more: Say, God hath given this, God continueth this; and be diligent to use these gifts to the honour and glory of the giver, for that is the chief end why he giveth them. Shall God give to thee, and then wilt thou take off from his glory and honour? Provoke not God to repent (as it were) that ever he did thus and thus to thee, as he did about the making of man, and preferring of Saul. Those that said, *Their tongues were their own*, Psal. 12. 4. were thereby encouraged to wickedness; whereas to consider thy wealth is not thy own, thy health is not thy own, thy eyes, thy tongue, thy body, these are not thy own, they are Gods gift. How carefull wouldst thou be to improve them all for his glory? *χαρις χαρις μακαρι* Let this grace of God, and his favour to thee, work thankfulness in thy life. It is Gods gift, do not then use it for sinne and the devil.

Reasons. Why these are all Gods gifts.

1. God is not necessitated to give them.

2. We have oft forfeited them by our sins.

3. We are to pray to him for them.





## SERM. LXXXIII.

*Of the Necessity and Usefulness of publick Ordinances; And of the Churches Interest in its Ministers Mercies.*

2 COR. I. 11.

*That for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by many, on our behalf.*

**T**Here remain three particulars in this Text, which are at this time to be dispatched. The two former because of their affinity shall be joyned together. For they contain the persons by whose prayers *Paul's* gift was bestowed upon him, and whose praises are to be returned to God in his behalf. Those by whose means this gift was bestowed, are said to be ἐν πολλῶν προσώπων, which expression hath caused very many conjectures amongst the learned.

I shall not be large about the word, for we shall meet with the word often in this second Epistle. *Musculus* observing the diversity of interpretations, doth offer his conjecture to the learned, that προσευχῶν, was at first written, which by mistake was afterwards turned to προσώπων. Now if this were so, viz. *By many prayers*, then the coherence would be very evident. But it is very dangerous to give way to the expunging of words in the original, and to substitute others in the room. Though humane Authors may endure such critical hands, yet the Scripture being divinely inspired, both in respect of the matter, and also the very words, it behoveth us to be the more fearfull herein. *Chrysostome* readeth the word in the singular number, ἐν πολλῷ προσώπῳ, though afterwards he applieth it to many. Retaining then the word, the question is about the sense. Some by προσώπα understand the face, especially the mouth; as if the meaning were, *by many mouths*. Others observe that the Greek word with the *Septuagint* is put for *panim*, which primarily signifieth the face and countenance, and from thence the respect and manner of a thing. So that the sense should be, *That thanks should be given to God for many respects*. There were many considerations in this one mercy, for which they were to bless God. Others read ἐν πολλῶν προσώπων, *In the face or presence of many*, that is, in the publick Congregation, as 2 Corinth. 8. 24. εἰς προσώπον Ἰησοῦ ἐκκλησιῶν, *Before the Churches*. And certainly, though we will not contend for the reading of the words so, yet the meaning of *Paul* is, That in their Church-societies, and publick meetings, they should both pray unto God, and praise God. But we shall pitch upon the ordinary use of the word, and understand it for as much as ἀνθρώπων, *By many persons*, or *by many men*.

The second thing is, *By whom thanks are to be given*, and that is, ἐν πολλῶν,  
By



By many. Some do adde the word *τεῖνον*, That ſeveral wayes, or, for many things praises may be given to God, becauſe they think it very redundant to have perſons again expreſſed. Some render it *great thanks*, and *eminent praises*; but it is moſt conſonant to interpret it of perſons; That the ſame many, who did pray for this mercy, were alſo to praise God for it.

Therefore from both theſe joyned together, we may take notice, That Paul doth not ſimply look at prayers and praises, from others ſingly and diſtributive-ly, but as conjoyned and collectively. The prayers of many met together, the praises of many aſſembled together, are more acceptable then of one alone. From whence obſerve,

*That not onely personal prayers and praises, but publick and ſolemn ones performed by many, are very acceptable together.*

Not only perſonal, but publick prayers and praises are acceptable to God.

Chryſoſtome doth from this enlarge himſelf, concerning the great power that a multitude hath, if met in an holy manner to prevail with God. They do (as it were) put God to ſhame (that is his expreſſion) he knoweth not how to gain-ſay many, when they knock and importune: whereupon he takes occaſion to ſpeak of the publick Church-prayers that were then made for the *Catechumens*, and doth in particular explicate every petition. But we ſhall keep to the Apoſtle, who doth deſire their publick prayers and praises, thereby commend- ing the profit and efficacy of them.

To amplify this, conſider this Caution,

Fiſt, *That though God delights in the aſſembling of many, yet they muſt be ſuch as are qualified according to Gods will.* It is not ſimply a multitude that God regardeth. We read of the *Iſraelites*, that in their diſtreſſes, they would make their approaches to God in great troops; yet the Lord abhorred their Sacrifices, becauſe they did not waſh themſelves, nor make them clean, ſo as to put away their iniquities and tranſgreſſions farre from them. If ſo be, the Wiſeman ſaith, *That one ſinner deſtroyeth much good*, then how much good do many deſtroy? If one dead flie ſpoil a box of ointment, what will many dead flies do? So that the more aſſembled together in this manner, the more is God provoked. For *Matth. 18.* our meeting muſt be in *Chriſts name*; not onely by his appointment, but alſo in that manner he hath required. Therefore you muſt take the Doctrine thus, Many godly perſons met together, doe more prevaile than ſome few, or one onely: Otherwiſe one *Job*, one *Daniel*, may obtaine more at Gods hand, then many thouſands of wicked men; for they have crying finnes which doe out-cry their prayers.

This being premixed, let us conſider, Why publick duties are to be preferred before private. And

Reasons.

Fiſt, *Becauſe hereby the glory and honour of God is more promoted.* If the multitude of Subjects be the glory of a King, then alſo is the multitude of true and ſpiritual worſhippers the glory of God. Hence David doth profeſſe, *That he will bleſſe God in the great Congregation*, *Pſal. 22. 25.* and *Pſal. 26. 12.* *Pſal. 40. 9, 10.* The greater the Congregation is, if duly qualified, the more honour cometh to God. Hence it is that in the Old Teſtament God commanded ſet dayes for all the people to meet together, and worſhip God. And in the New Teſtament, we have frequent inſtances of the Churches meeting together to worſhip God. Inſomuch that it is a very ſinfull reaſoning which ſome have, What ſhould they goe to Church for? They can ſtay at home, and read of a good book, and ſo get as much good. Oh but know, O vain man! Though that ſhould be granted,

1. Hereby the honour of God is more promoted.



ed, which yet is not, that thou couldst profit as much, yet thou owest honour, and glory, and worship to God, and that in the Congregation. Do not the Angels in multitudes praise God together? Why is it called a *Church*, but because many are to have communion together? So that unlesse God doth dispense with thee, that he will have no honour or glory from thee, it is thy sinne, if not otherwise necessarily detained, voluntarily to absent from these publick Ordinances. The Apostle, *Heb. 10. 25.* doth reprove the manner of some in those dayes, who did not *assemble themselves together*. You see even in the Apostles dayes the Devil tempted some in this kind; yet they are reprov'd, though private Christians in those dayes had greater gifts, and abilities then now ordinarily men have; yea they are reprov'd, though some think the cause was not voluntary, but that it was fear of danger and persecution. It was criminal to meet together, and therefore fear of death, and other miseries might make some forbear to assemble themselves; yet for all this they are censured by the Apostle. Let this then be laid to heart by thee: look that no reason keep thee from this publick worship of God, but what God himself will allow of: For in some cases God hath condescended that his own worship shall rather be omitted, then mens necessities not supplied.

2. Hereby our love to one another is much quickened.

Secondly, As God is more honoured, so hereby *The love and charity of the people of God is greatly quickened to one another.* This publick and holy meeting together, is a special means to enflame the affections of one believer to another. Hence you have it so often noted, *That the Disciples met together with one accord, and they had one heart.* And therefore diversities of opinions and alienation of affections, do cause commonly a publick rent and division in Church-societies. *David* doth with affection expresse the advantage of the publick Ordinances, *We went to the house of the Lord, and we took sweet counsel together,* *Psal. 55. 14.* This is the visible communion of the Saints, wherein as members of the same body, they are so firmly and nearly compacted together. There is nothing that the Devil doth so much design, as rents, schismes and differences in the Church of God, knowing that these, if not healed, will certainly destroy all at last. Now a right and orderly meeting in these publick Assemblies, are a special means to preserve love. How shall those mouths speak against one another, that joyned together to pray to God, and to praise God? You that called upon one Father, as Brethren, How shall ye disagree, as if one had not the same God, and the same Father with another? Therefore our Saviour directs to say, *Our Father, not my Father;* hereby commanding our publick meetings together, and also our union and brotherly love.

3. God in a more especial manner present there.

Thirdly, *Therefore are these publick duties to be the more prized, Because of Gods special presence and power there.* *Mat. 18.* You have a peculiar promise, *for two or three meeting together in Christs name, even as by way of type, God had promised his peculiar presence in the Temple.* And for this reason you have *David* with such ardent and passionate affections expressing his esteem of the Ordinances of God, *Psal. 63. 1, 2. My soul thirsteth, and my flesh longeth as in a dry land, where no water is, to see thy power.* And at another time, *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts?* And, *As the Hart panteth after the brooks, so doth his soul after God in the Ordinances.* Though *David* when he was banished, and by force could not come to the publick Congregation, no doubt did enjoy God in a most comfortable and full manner, yet still he is not satisfied, but breaths for his presence in those Ordinances. And therefore for thee to think, that thou mayest meet God as well at home, is as if a cripple should have looked to be healed by going into some other water, then that of the pool of *Bethesda.*

Lastly,



Lastly, These publick Ordinances are therefore to be highly esteemed, *Because those who are quickened and enlivened, may prevail for those who are indisposed and unfit for prayer.* So that the coldnesse and dulnesse of one man may be supplied by the zeal and fervency of another. Infomuch that happily the prayer, which if performed by thy own self, would not be successfull, being now joyned with others, doth obtain its desired effect; yea it may be in that publick service, when thou through temptations canst or darest not pray for thy self; others accompanying of thee, do put up thy own thoughts, and speak the desires of thy own heart: So that thou art even astonished to see, how God ordereth the gracious gifts of others to be helpfull unto thee. As it was with *Job*, his whole body, though full of ulcers and pains, yet because his mouth was free, that could plead with God in behalt of the whole body; Thus it may be, when many are gathered together, that Christian who could not speak for it self, which could not pray for it self, findeth the hearts and mouths of others opened in his behalf. So that as when many coals are laid together, some live ones may revive those that are ready to decay: Thus the zeale of others may helpe thy coldnesse: The life of others may quicken thee up against deadnesse; and thou find that spiritual heat come upon thee from others, which thou wouldst not have had alone.

4. Herein the lively may prevail for the dull and indisposed.

*Use of Exhortation,* To prize these publick Assemblies more than thou hast done. Pray for such strong and earnest affections, as thou findest *David* manifesting after them. Oh let these publick meetings raise up thy heart, as if thou wert in Heaven! The beholding of the faces, of the affections, and of the graces of others, let it assimilate thee also into them. As when *Saul* came among the Prophets, the spirit of prophecy fell upon him likewise. Oh let the Congregation of those who feare God worke upon thee also! Be in these Assemblies, as *Peter* on the Mount of transfiguration, saying in an holy excesse of spirit, *It is good to be here.* What high expressions are those of *David*, in reference to the solemne Ordinances? *Psal. 65. 4. Blessed is the man thou chooshest, and canst to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy Courts; we shall be satisfied with the goodnesse of thy house, even of thy holy Temple.* Here is sweetnesse and fullnesse that the people of God find in these publick approaches. All the merry meetings, all the fairs and markets, are nothing to this spiritual society. And *Psal. 84. 10. A day in thy Courts, is better than a thousand elsewhere.* Hence he had rather be a door-keeper in the house of God, then dwell in the tents of wickednesse. Oh heavenly and gracious frame! A Sabbath day is better than all the dayes of the week, he hath more rejoycing there, then a thousand dayes can afford that are spent in worldly affaires. But when these publick duties are thus advanced (as you hear) you must alwayes look, that they be done holily, spiritually, fervently, that they be not turned into a meer custome and external fashion, as it too often falleth out in Church-assemblies, their bodies are present, but their souls are absent; and therefore they have no more than the carkasse and out-side. Such prayers and praises God will not accept.

The third and last particular is to be spoken to in a word; and that is, In whose behalf these publick prayers and praises are, and that is said, *In our behalfe.* Some Copies have read it *quas*, but that is not probable. It is then for that deliverance vouchsafed to *Paul*, that they are to be thankful; and the reason is clear, because mercies vouchsafed to *Paul*, were their mercies also. From whence observe,



Mercies vouchsafed to the Ministers, are to be accounted as Church mercies.

*That the mercies vouchsafed to the pastors and guides of the Church, are to be accounted the Churches mercies.*

What advantage comes to the shepherd, it redounds to the sheep. The rain that falls upon the mountains, descendeth to the benefit of the valleys. Your life, your comfort is bound up in theirs. *Paul* indeed said, *We live, if you stand fast.* It was his comfort, his life, to see them preserved from *Apolonia* by persecution, *1 Thess.* 3. 8. And on the contrary, the Church may say of her guides, *We stand fast, if you live.* As mercies to the publick Magistrates are to be accounted the peoples mercies; so the mercies of Church-officers are to be reckoned the Churches. If the Pilotes be in danger, it can never be well with the ship. When *Elijah* was taken away, the cry was, *The chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.* So great a mercy was one Prophet accounted to be. We have a notable instance of the holy care of the *Philippians* about their Pastor *Epaphroditus*, *Phil.* 2. 26, 27. when he was sick unto death; how heavily did they lay it to heart? Inasmuch that *Epaphroditus* was exceedingly grieved, that they had heard of his being sick, he knew it would so greatly afflict them. Yea *Paul* accounted it a mercy to him also, that God did heal him. For though *Paul* did recover many out of their diseases, yet this gift was not when they pleased, and it was least of all extended to those that were of their intimate acquaintance, but rather to such as were brought to them, that so the truth of their miracles might be more manifested.

*Use of Instruction.* How happy and blessed a thing it is, when people are able to do their duty herein; To look upon all the favours and good providences of God to the Ministers of the Gospel, as their own mercies; their health, encouragements, preservations, as their owne; but how bitterly doth *Satan* fill the hearts of some men, who out of love to their lusts, and their errours, look upon their godly guides, as the greatest burthens, and would heartily rejoyce in any evil that should befall them? This is clean contrary to those gracious, loving and endeared affections, which ought to be in people to their spiritual shepherds.





## SERM. LXXXIV.

Of our Glorifying and Rejoycing in our Gifts and Graces; Why, and how it is lawfull, and how not.

2 COR. I. 12.

For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards.

**T**His verse (as appeareth by the ratiocinative particular, or note of inference, *For*) is brought in as a reason of something which went before. But Interpreters do differ about the coherence thereof. Some make this to be a reason of that hope and trust he formerly spake of, which he had in God. Though he did trust in Gods mercies, yet not in them alone, but in his own endeavours also. Hence *Aquinas* from this saith, *That hope doth arise from the mercy of God, and mans merits*. But this doth not consist with Scripture. Others do make it part of his Apologetical Narration, defending himself, as against that crime of inconstancy and levity, which was cast upon him, because of his promise to come to them, which yet he did not; and therefore they think these words look backward, and not forward. *Calvin* and others (which is most probable) referre it to the words immediately preceding, *viz.* their prayers and praises to God in his behalf. This is given as a reason, why they should be thus tender about him, because he had obtained grace to be faithfull; he had not sought himself, or his own glory; he had not walked in hypocrisie and fraud, but had been kept by the grace of God in all sincerity in his conversation in the world, not only at *Corinth*, but every where else. Now it is a great motive and encouragement to pray for such. The Apostle useth this argument, *Heb.* 13. 18. *Pray for us, for we trust we have a good conscience in all things*.

The connexion then being thus discovered, we come to the Text absolutely considered; and therein we may consider,

1. The ground and reason it self.
2. That which is affirmed and predicated of it. And this is set down in the fore-part of the verse, and therefore we shall begin with it.

The words are, *This is our rejoycing*, *καυχόμενοι*, it is rendred by most, *our glory*, or *our boasting*. The Apostle doth very often use the words, *καυχόμενοι*, *καυχόμενα*, and *καυχᾶμεν*, it seemeth to come of *αυχᾶν*, which is of *αυχῶν*, the neck, and so is a metaphore, signifying for the most part *pride* and *loftinesse*, taken from horses, whose pride will be discovered by their neck; and therefore called *ὕψυχως*, or as *Homer* *ἐταυχῶντος ἵππου*. So that for the most part it is taken in an ill sense. Hence *Hesychius* *καυχᾶνται*, *καμπτείν*, and with *Βυδαν* *καυχῶνται* is a proud boaster



boaster and bragger ; but with *Paul* it is used sometimes in a good sense, as here. For the word is used in a three-fold sense, gradual to one another.

1. To rest and relie upon a thing.
2. From thence to rejoyce and to be glad in it.
3. From thence to declare and publish this with boasting.

Now though *Paul* did not put confidence and trust in his good and sincere conscience, yet from the perceiving of that, he did rejoyce. Whereas then we see *Paul* rejoycing and glorying from the testimony and evidence of that grace he had in him. We may observe,

An holy rejoycing and glorying in the graces of God is lawfull.

*That an holy glorying, and rejoycing in the graces of God, we perceive in us, is allowed and lawfull.*

I say, *an holy glorying*, for the heart may quickly degenerate into a proud sinfull boasting. Therefore this truth must be warily bounded : So that the dejected and tempted soul, may be quickned to its duty of comfort, and not to deny the work of grace that it may feel, and the proud pharisaical spirit may be debased. The valley must be exalted, and the mountain made low. It is true indeed, we have the Scripture saying, *Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord. Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom*, 1 Cor. 1. 31. And if *Abraham* had not wherewith to glory, who can have ? Yea the Apostle saith expressly, *Rom. 3. 27. That glorying is excluded by the law of faith.* But in what sense this is to be understood, will appear, when we come to manifest, how many wayes it is not lawfull to glory, or to rejoyce, no not in our gifts and graces. Only this Text maketh it plain, that in some sense our graces may be matter of glory and rejoycing to us. So likewise *Gal. 6. 4.* the Apostle pressing every man to try his own works, to examine his intentions therein, giveth this as the consequent fruit thereof, *That then he shall have rejoycing in himself*, *καυχουα*, a kind of *glorying* and *boasting* in himself.

What is required to our glorying in the gifts and graces we have received from God.

1. An high esteem of our graces.

To clear this truth, let us first shew what is required to this glorying, and then in what respects it is lawfull and allowed us. And for the former,

First, It is necessary to this rejoycing and glorying, in the first place, *That we have an high esteem of the excellency and worth of that grace we discover to be in us.* If so be we are to rejoyce in these outward mercies, which yet are only for the body, what matter of joy should it be, to find those spiritual workings of Gods Spirit in us, which are of eternal concernment ? What *Solomon* saith concerning the esteem of wisdom, which is indeed nothing but grace, we should all make good, *Prov. 2. 4. If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her, as for hid treasures.* That soul then, which can rejoyce in the discovery of grace, must esteem of it more than all the treasures of the world : To say, O Lord, I had rather find my self sanctified, I had rather see the powerfull workings of grace upon me, then to be made the greatest or richest man in the world; we have many exhortations to examine our selves, and try our hearts, to see if we can find this precious jewel in our souls. Now none will be cordial to examine and search herein, but those who look upon it as the greatest treasure. Did the woman in the Gospel make such diligent search for a lost groat only, and call her neighbours to rejoyce with her, when she had found it ? How large and boundless then should our thoughts be about the excellency of grace ? And indeed to the godly soul this is the great question it labours to study, and to resolve, Whether it be in the state of grace or no, knowing that this onely is the most blessed and happy estate in the world.

2. A certain perswasion that we have them.

Secondly, As we must highly esteem this work of grace, so we must have a *Certainty and perswasion that we have obtained it.* Had not *Paul* known, that his heart had been sincere, that he was not acted by carnal wisdom, he could never



never have rejoyced. For Philosophers make joy to be in that *good thing we do possesse*, and also the *knowledge* thereof. This Text then doth abundantly declare, that the people of God may have a certain knowledge of the work of grace. So that although the heart be indeed deceitfull and full of hypocrisie, yet when sanctified, it hath some measure of truth and sincerity in it, and so far doth not deceive us. He then that would rejoyce in the grace of God wrought in him, must presse after assurance, must endeavour after a certain perswasion of the truth of grace in him. And although this perswasion be not justifying faith, yea it is separable from it. A man may be justified, may be sanctified, and not know it, yet it is such a priviledge, yea and duty also, that we should diligently take heed of all those things, that may weaken our assurance, that may make us to doubt and question, whether Jesus Christ be in us or no.

Thirdly, *A sure perswasion of the goodnesse and integrity of our hearts, is not enough, but it must be upon right grounds, and in a Scripture-demonstration.* For if it be a false perswasion, it may produce indeed a rejoycing, but a false rejoycing also. It is more than probable, that Paul while a persecutor, being zealously affected to the tradition of his fathers, and thinking himself bound (as he professeth) to do what he did against Christ and his members, could then say, *His rejoycing was the testimony of his conscience*, being perswaded that in those wayes he glorified God: And therefore some do extend that profession of his before the Council, *That he had lived in all good conscience before God untill that day.* And if this be so, then we see plainly, That every perswasion, though never so confident, is not enough to make us rejoyce; but we must look to Scripture-grounds. Doth not experience confirm this? Take any heretical person, any erroneous person, though it be to the destruction of the very fundamentals of Religion, yet he will proclaim a rejoycing in his heart, from the good testimony of his conscience. So that an erroneous conscience satisfied, doth bring peace and rejoycing, but it is an erroneous joy. It is either from meer humane principles, or from diabolical delusions. But this will come in more properly, when we come to the ground or reason it self of Paul's rejoycing.

3. Good grounds and Scripture-demonstrations thereof.

Fourthly, To this rejoycing there is required, *The Spirit of God enabling us therunto.* So that the same spirit, which doth seal to us the assurance of our estate, doth also cause comfort in us. The Spirit of God doth enlighten and sanctifie, after this it doth seal and comfort. And this latter work of Gods Spirit is necessary, as well as the other. For we see it lieth not in the power of Gods people to have comfort when they will. Hence Gal. 5. Joy is the fruit of the Spirit; and it's called *Joy in the holy Ghost*; not only objectively, because it is a joy in spiritual objects; but also efficiently, because it is wrought by him. Hence it is that the Spirit of God mouldeth the heart for comfort, removeth fears and doubts, restraineth and keepeth off Satan, whereby no sinne, no Devil is able to deject and cast down, because God comforteth. Thus you see what goeth to rejoycing in the graces of God, and thereby an holy glorying in them.

4. The Spirit of God.

Now let us see in what respect it is lawfull thus to rejoyce. And

First, *It is lawfull to rejoyce in them, as they are the effects and fruits of Gods favour and love, as they signifie the cause from whence they come.* Rahab could not but rejoyce to see the thread that was a signe of such a great mercy designed for her. If then the godly man have that spiritual skill, as to difference between trusting in his graces, as any way causes of his salvation, and thankfully receiving them as signes, from which he may be perswaded of it, then doth he hit the mark. It is usually said from Luther, *That we are to take heed not onely of evil deeds, but of good and holy works also*, because the heart is apt to be carried away with pride and self-confidence insensibly, yet this much

In what respect 'tis lawfull thus to rejoyce and glory.

1. As they are the fruits of Gods favour.

not



not so deterre the people of God, that they may not take comfort from their graces. For how can they see them, and not rejoyce, because they are the pledge of Gods favour it self, and of an interest in Christ? So that though their graces be weak, and full of imperfections, yet they manifest that to be ours, which is fully perfect, and hath no fault at all in it. Imperfect graces do manifest Gods perfect grace to us.

2. As they bear up our hearts against all accusations, either external or internal.

Secondly, *We may rejoyce in them so farre as thereby to bear up our hearts against all accusations, whether internally from Satan, or externally from the malice of men.* Is there any greater temptation in the world, then that when Satan accuseth the children of God, that they are hypocrites, that there is no truth of grace in them, that what they do is not from a right principle, but self-seeking? Even as he accused Job to God, that he served God for carnal ends, because God had hedged him about; but if he were touched in these things, and stript of them, then he would betray his hypocrisie. Now it is lawfull for the children of God to defie these accusations of Satan; to rejoyce in the sense of their uprightness, though the Devil rage at it. While he roareth, do thou be glad and praise God. Oh how often are believers shaken in this very particular! They are afraid to own what God hath done for them; they think it their humility and lowliness thus to be in doubts, and to be perplexed with fears, not remembring how necessary it is, to acknowledge thankfully what God hath done for us, and to walk with joy, triumphing over all the fiery darts of Satan. It is the great blame of Christs Disciples, that they do not more glory and rejoyce in this respect. And then

2. This rejoycing is lawfull, when we have to do with *malicious enemies*, that are ready to charge us with hypocrisie and self-seeking, that for all our religious pretences, we have rotten and earthly hearts; then is a time for thee to make use of rejoycing in the sincerity of thy soul. And this indeed is one great part of the Apostles meaning. The false Apostles they calumniated him, they made the cause of all his afflictions and troubles to be his evil life, and Gods displeasure upon him. Now the Apostle hath this brazen wall within, as the *Hearthen* called it, *He hath the witnesse of a good conscience.* As *Austin* to *Secundinus*, *Senti de Augustino quid velis, &c.* Think of Austin what you will, so that my own conscience doth not condemn me. This rejoycing therefore is necessarily seen in this particular.

Wherein this rejoycing is unlawfull.

In the third place, Let us see, wherein this rejoycing in our graces may be unlawfull. And

1. When we rejoyce in our graces, as if they were perfect.

1. *It is when we dare rejoyce, and that in the sight of God, as if there were no blemish or damnable matter in them.* To rejoyce as Perfectionists do in their holiness, daring to hold it up to God himself in his strict justice, this is highly provoking God. Hence this Apostle, 1 Cor. 4. 3, 4. Though he regarded not mens judgement concerning him, because he knew nothing by himself, yet he saith, *He was not thereby justified, because it was God that judgeth:* God that knew more evil, and saw more sinne in him, then he could do in himself. Therefore though we may rejoyce in them, yet take heed of opposing them to the strict and righteous judgement of God. And it is in this sense, that *Paul*, Rom. 3. saith, *All boasting is excluded;* and that *Abraham* in the matter of justification, *had not wherewith to boast.*

2. When we so rejoyce in them, as to rest upon them.

2. *It is not lawfull to rejoyce in them, as if they had any inherent dignity or worth to rest upon.* When we approach to God, we must rest alone upon Gods grace, as the efficient cause, and Christ as the meritorious cause. These are the only foundation we can build upon. When therefore we have given Gods grace, and Christs merits their full due, then may we rejoyce in our holiness. It is true, we read of *Hezekiah*, *David*, *Nehemiah*, and *Paul* here, as also in other places, pleading even in prayer their righteousness, and desiring God



God to remember them, and not wipe out their good deeds. But these instances are partly in some particular, wherein they were innocent, as in *David*: Or else they only plead these, as the qualifications in them, to which Gods promises are made; they are such to whom God hath vouchsafed his promises; and therefore they may plead them in their prayers in this sense; otherwise to urge them, as having dignity, they could not. For at that very time *Nehemiah* prayeth, God would spare him, and have mercy on him.

3. We must not rejoyce in these graces, as if we had them of our selves, as if they were not the gift of God. Therefore *Chrysostom's* note upon the place is dangerous, saying, *The reason why this good conscience is called glorying, is, because we obtain it by our own strength; otherwise it would not be our glorying.* But the Apostle directly opposeth this, *1 Cor. 4. 7. Why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received?* But you may then say, The Papists are not to be found fault with in their rejoycing in their good works, for they make them the gifts of Gods grace, and presuppose Christs merits. But this will not acquit them. For the Apostle maketh that a contradiction, *If of grace, then not of workes*: It cannot be of grace and works together. Besides, they make grace only an universal cause, and our own will to be the particular determining cause, and thereby give much more to that, then the grace of God. If then we take heed of these three rocks, we are allowed to rejoyce in our graces.

3. When we rejoyce in them as coming from our selves, not God

*Use 1. Of severe and sharp reproof*, to such, who do indeed rejoyce, but it is in their lusts, in the pleasures of sinne, which is to rejoyce in their shame, and that which will be terrour and torment to them. What can these wretches say? But our rejoycing is an evil and a seared conscience, that we have lived in all prophaneness and impiety? Oh remember into what howling and gnashing of teeth these short pleasures will at last be changed!

*Use 2. Of Admonition to the godly*, to take this rejoycing which God doth allow them. Why do they stand aloof off, and trembling? Why do they nourish doubts and fears? Why will ye not own what God hath done for you? Take an holy boldness, call that grace, which is grace. Let not the Devil and thy fears dispute thee out of what thou art. Be not so easily baffled and driven out of thy integrity. Because hypocrites do deceive themselves, do the sincere also? Because Copper may appear splendidly, is there therefore no gold? Because a dreamer deceiveth himself, shall he that is awakened?





## SERM. LXXXV.

*What is required to a good and well ordered Conscience.*

2 COR. I. 12.

*The testimony of our conscience.*

**T**He second particular, which is also the ground of that rejoycing which Paul had, doth in the next place come to be treated of, and that is said, to be *The testimony of his conscience*. The object matter whereof is afterwards declared.

Let us consider this as it is in the general set down. Concerning the word *συνηστος*, also the nature of the conscience, what it is, I have elsewhere at large shewed. It is enough to re-mind you of thus much, That in the Old Testament it is generally called the *heart*, as it is said, *Dauids heart smote him*, that is, *his conscience did witnesse against him*, and condemn him. And because of that *remorsus*, that regreing and displicency which conscience putteth forth, *Durand* is singular in his opinion, holding that the practical understanding is not the conscience only, but the will likewise is included in it. The Hebrew word *Leb*, signifying the *Heart*, doth also originally denote the sprinkling of the meal with leaven: Thus the heart hath naturally some principles in it, which are like leaven to it, as speculative and practical axiomes concerning God, and just, and unjust. In the New Testament likewise it is called the *heart*, 1 John 3. 20. *If our heart condemne us*, (that is, our conscience) *God is greater than our heart*. But no more of this here.

This conscience is here described by one special act it hath, and that is, *To bear witnesse*, μαρτυρεῖν. The word in the Scripture is commonly used for that publick testimony and witness, which either God did give unto the Gospel by miracles and signes, or men by their publick profession and attestation. Hence 1 Cor. 2. 1. the Gospel is called the *testimony of God*, because so wonderfully confirmed by him: So to men it is applied, Act. 4. 3. The Apostles with great power gave witnesse of the Resurrection of Christ; and because believers by their deaths did give the greatest testimony to the truths of God, hence they are called *Martyrs*, and their death is called μαρτυρίον, a *Martyrdome* in a principal sense. Hence some have expounded that place, Heb. 11. 4, 39. where we render it, *The Elders obtained a good report of their Martyrdome*. They were made Martyrs, because it is the passive sense ἐμαρτυρήθησαν. Sometimes the word is used metaphorically, as James 5. 3. the rust of covetous, and wicked rich mens gold and silver, is said to be a *witnesse against them*: But here it is used concerning the work of conscience within a man, and is in other places compounded, denoting some joynt-witnesse with another, Romans 2. 15. *Their conscience bearing witnesse*,



ness, *συμμετρεῖς*. So Rom. 9. 1. *My conscience also bearing me witnesse.* The Preposition *συν*, though some think is not to be regarded, yet it doth denote, (as most say) a respect to God, who is our Superiour, and to whom our conscience doth attend, and therefore called not *Science*, but *Conscience*. So that Gods witness, and the witness of conscience, are both conjoynd together, yea seem to be but one testimony, as it were. Hence the very *Hearhens* could say, *Βεβαιαν ἅπασιν συνείδησις ἐστὶν ὁ θεός*, *Conscience is a God to every man.* Therefore *Paul* useth an equivalent expression in other places, Rom. 1. 9. *Phil.* 1. 8. *God is my witnesse.* *Salmieron* out of *Bernard* speaks of a two-fold testimony of the conscience, *Testimonium conscientia perhibentis*, that which the conscience doth actively exhibit; and *Conscientia percipientis*, that which it doth receive from the Spirit of God, of which we read Rom. 8. 16. and in this later sense he understands it: But we take both in, viz. that witness which the conscience did actually give of *Paul's* sincerity. But because this could not be done without the Spirit of God inabling thereunto, therefore it is a witness received from Gods Spirit first, and from that conscience is enabled to deliver it to us.

Now when so much rejoycing is attributed to the testimony of conscience, you must take along with you, who it is that speaketh thus, *The testimony of our conscience*, of *Paul*, who was sanctified, enlightned, and guided by the Word; otherwise there is a testimony of a *decluded conscience*, of a *secure conscience*, that speaketh peace, when there is no peace; and this doth not afford any true or solid ground of rejoycing; it must be therefore the testimony of such a conscience, which *Paul* had. And so observe,

*That the witnesse of our conscience rightly guided in acquitting of us, is a ground of unspeakable comfort.*

The witnesse of a good conscience is great ground of comfort.

He that hath his conscience rightly clearing of him, he need not care for all the accusations of the Devils in hell, and wicked men upon the earth. It breedeth confidence both towards God and towards men. Towards God, 1 *John* 3. 21. *If our hearts condemn us not, we have confidence towards God, and whatsoever we aske, we receive of him.* This encourageth and imboldeneth in prayer. And towards men: As you see *Paul* justified himself by this, when called before the Council, and made to plead for himself, *Act.* 23. 1. Yea the *Heathens*, though they could never attain to a true spiritually sanctified conscience, yet not to live according to the natural dictates thereof, they accounted the only happiness, *Nil conscire sibi*—was the onely thing that made happy. And *Hic murus aheneus esto.* *Pindar* called it, *The good nurse in our old age.* So great a matter is it to have the testimony of a good conscience, void of offence, for that is *Mille testes*, more than all the testimonies in the world.

Seeing therefore men have such constant recourse to this witnesse within, and their comfort is true or false, according as that is guided; Let us enquire first into the constituent or ingredient qualities, of a rightly guided conscience. And

What is required to a good conscience.

First, *There is necessarily required to a good and true testimony of our conscience, That it take the word of God as a Rule to judge by, to witnesse by, to accuse by, and to acquit by.* The conscience of a man is not the supream rule, but an inferiour; and therefore is *Regula regulata*, as well as *Regula regulans*, a rule to be ruled by an higher rule, which is the Scripture. *To the Law, to the testimony, if they speak not according to this, it is because there is no light in them,* *Isa.* 8. 20. If a man pretend to never so much light within, if he rejoyceth never so much in the light that he hath, yet if it be not from the light of the Word, if it be not examined, tried and judged to be according to that

1. That it witness according to the word of God.



it is but a false light, a light that will end in darkness. So then, though conscience be a testimony, yet you see that hath another testimony to be guided by; though it be a Law in a man, yet there is a superiour Law to that, which is the word of God. By this you may see, what a rotten foundation they have to build their comforts upon, who take up other rules for their conscience, besides the Scripture. These joyes are all but like the morning-dew. Some make their rule in Religion, to be the tradition of their Fathers. The Papist doth so extoll tradition, that they think that alone without Scripture is starre bright enough to guide us. *Paul's* zeal while a persecutor seemed to be grounded much upon this, because they were the traditions of his fathers. And truly tradition is the greatest reason of most mens faith, whether it be in a right way, or a true. But this is an improper foundation for thy faith. As thy faith is hereby a blind faith, so thy comfort is but a blind comfort. How greatly do the *Popish Casuists* perplex their people with such cases of conscience, and about such superstitious things, that they have only tradition for, and that it may be not many yeares neither, without any stamp or superscription of the Scripture? Have not they comfort in their Penances, in their Indulgences? Will not their Friars and Monks (not those slow beasts and idle bellies) who from deluded principles of conscience, do severely and austerly mortifie themselves, say, *They have the testimony of their consciences*, and make a bulwark from thence? But where is the rule they go by? Is it not tradition? On the contrary side, in another extrem, there is the *Enthusiast*, who rejecteth the Scripture as a dead letter, and doth adhere only to revelations, to pretended workings of Gods Spirit, to the manifest light within them: Doe not these even boast in their joyes and ravishments? Doe they not, when unable to answer arguments, flie to a light within them? But what ground is there for this? Is not the Apostles command, *That we should not believe every spirit, but try them?* 1 John 4.1. And how must that be but by the Scripture? You see then, that it is not conscience simply and alone, but a Scripture-conscience that is the ground of comfort. To leave that, and to trust in our conscience, is to make our consciences a Bible, to attribute infallibility to our selves. Now this Scripture is not only a Rule for our conscience in matters of faith, but also of manners, of righteousness towards man. Conscience must witness to thee, not only that thou art in the true Religion, but also doest walk in holy conversation. It must testifie of thy righteousness towards man, as well as of Religion towards God. This was *Paul's* continual exercise, *Act. 24. 26. To have a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards man.* There are many voluminous Tractates of Cases of Conscience, *De jure & justitiâ*, Of Righteousnesse towards man. And although the Scripture doth not particularly decide Law-cases, yet it layeth down such general rules, that by them particulars may easily be decided, if our hearts were not corrupt. As for example, that famous rule, *What you would have men do to you; do ye to them*, Mat. 7. 12. Our Saviour after he had given religious precepts about prayer, &c. he addeth this, to shew that Religion and righteousness must alwayes go together. And *Adrian* the Emperour was so affected with this Rule, saying, He had it from the Jews or Christians, that he commanded it to be written on the doors and gates of his Palace; and before he would punish any offender, would inform him of this Rule. And our Saviour saith, *This is the Law and the Prophets*. A great expression. Look then to thy conscience, that it take the Scripture for a Rule in its adequate nature. For faith and conversation, this is no rule for conscience to go by. Others do say, every one is to look to himself; but the word of God that must bear evidence to thee by thy conscience.

2. The help of the Spirit to instruct us in the true meaning of the Word.

Secondly, To the right guidance of our conscience, in witnessing to us, there is not only required the Word as a Rule, *But the Spirit of God to enlighten thy mind,*



mind to receive the true meaning thereof. Such are the powerfull delusions of Satan, that when he can no longer dethrone the Scripture from its authority, but men will appeal to that, then he looketh about to advance his Kingdom by the Scriptures ill handled, and wrested to corrupt opinions; and by this means men are brought into a worse condition, and more incurable then those who walk by no Scripture at all. For if a man be delivered up to this perswasion, that his opinions and wayes are allowed by Scripture, warranted by Scripture, what way shall we take to reduce him? The Apostle Peter telleth us of some *unstable and unlearned men*, 2 Pet. 3. 16. *which did wrest the Scriptures to their own perdition*; And nothing is more ordinary, which made Luther say, *That the Bible was the Hereticks book*; not in the sense the Papists do, accusing it thereby of insufficiency and imperfection: But for the dignity of it, having such authority, that every Heretick would gladly runne to this Sanctuary. The Scripture then, though a perfect Rule, yet is not enough to guide our conscience, unless the *Spirit of God*, as is promised, *lead us into truth*; As the Sunne, though never so full of light, yet cannot guide a blind man. We grant indeed that the Scripture is but a *dead letter*, and of it self without Gods Spirit, doth not enlighten the mind, and convert the heart. Only we say, The Spirit doth this, in and by the Scripture, and that all mens consciences, impulses, light, revelations and joyes, must be examined, and stand or fall according to this Rule. Let this be granted, and then we plead as fervently as any can, for the work of Gods Spirit. This must enlighten the conscience, to be able to understand and believe the things revealed there. Hence the Disciples could not attempt their office, of publishing the Gospel, without this assistance from the holy Ghost, *John* 16. 13. he is said, *To guid them into all truth. To guide them, ὁδηγῶν*, this signifieth that they did not know the way; or if they were in, they would quickly divert into by-paths, if this Spirit did not guide them. When David said, *The Word was a lamp and light to his feet*: If we understand it effectually, so that it did not only propound the light objectively, but that also he was subjectively thereby illuminated, this doth necessarily presuppose the work of Gods Spirit. No wonder then, if so many may be exceedingly acquainted with Scripture, be ready with some Texts upon every occasion, yet for all that be deluded with errors, because they want Gods Spirit to enlighten them, and instruct them thereby. Let us look upon the *Jews*, the saddest object in the world at this day; they have been so skilfull in the Old Testament, that some could remember how many words and syllables were therein, and that is read to them daily; yet who more maliciously opposite unto the Lord Christ, promised in the Old Testament, than they are? But the Scripture giveth a full reason thereof, *The veil is upon their eyes*. And long before there was such a prediction of this spiritual judgement upon them, *That seeing they should not see, hearing not hear, lest they understand and be converted*. Therefore to have a pure and true conscience, we must be sure to pray and exercise our selves herein, that the Spirit of God would direct us into the true sense and meaning of the Word, which is to be expected in the holy use of those means which are necessary to find out the sense thereof. For you must not expect that Gods Spirit will immediately reveal the sense of the Scripture, without other helps, no more than he will make you understand Greek and Hebrew. Know then, it is a very sad, and almost incurable condition, when the holy Scriptures do become a snare to us, when we suck poison out of these sweet herbs. Although indeed we cannot from the Scripture get any hurt, but our own corruptions procure it to us, because we bring the Scripture to our ends and affections, not them to the Scripture.

Thirdly, To the having of a well-ordered conscience, *There is greatly required pure aims and intentions*. For although a good intention cannot sancti-

3. Pure aims and intentions



file an unlawfull action, yet corrupt intentions will blast, and defile the best actions. Infomuch that if we had the gifts and parts of the ablest men, yea of Angels themselves, yet sinfull aims would be like Locusts and Caterpillars to devour this hopefull fruit. But oh the unsearchable hypocrisie and deceitfulness of mans heart, even in this very respect! How ready is every *Pharisee*, every *Hertick* and *Papist* to appropriate this to themselves? How often do we find them professing to the whole world, that it is not any outward advantage, any temporal emolument that they look at or regard, but the glory of God, and that therefore they have much rejoycing, because of this? But if the counterfeite will bring such peace, what will the real and sincere intentions of a man do? And certainly though a man be cloathed with never so much glory in the Church of God; so that we are ready to say, not only a greater than *Austin* or *Chrysostome*, but even than *Paul* or *Peter* (For some have cried up the heads of their parties, as having greater gifts, than the Apostles themselves:) Yet without sincere intentions they are but as a tinkling cymbal. This therefore is the life, soul, and the all in a good conscience. But that will come in more seasonably afterwards.

4. Inward sanctification.

Fourthly, To a right ordered conscience, whose witness may be received, and comfort taken thereby, *That there is required the inward sanctification and effectual renovation thereof.* So that till this be, every mans conscience is like a man himself, a meer liar; There is no believing of it, no trusting of it. When it is said, *Ier. 17. That the heart of a man is deceitfully wicked, or crafty, and supplanting a man.* This comprehends conscience, as well as any part else. For you have heard, that original sinne is in this, as well as in other powers of the soul, So that in these two respects, the natural conscience doth alwayes fail. For either it doth not witness that which is right, or not to a right end. Infomuch, that though a natural man is not to gainsay, or contradict his conscience, yet nothing lieth upon him more, than to have his conscience rightly informed or regulated by Gods word. What is the reason you see every civil man, every formal man so applauding himself in his good condition? It is because his conscience is not a spiritual conscience, a Scripture-conscience; for that would make him abhor himself, and flie out of the *Sodome* he was in. For in most things the conscience doth not witness the truth at all, but it doth flatter and deceive thee. How seldom doth it tell thee; thou art the drunkard, the hypocrite, the neglecter of private duties, &c! Or if it doth, then it is to a false end, either to drive to despair, and to flie from Christ, whose blood only can cleanse the conscience; or else to quiet it again by some superstitious usages, and non-instituted remedies. And this is the reason, why so few are brought out of the troubles of their conscience into an Evangelical and Gospel way. Know then, here is the root of all thy misery, thy conscience being un sanctified, lulleth thee asleep, whereby thou rejoycest in thy condition, when thou hast cause to fear and tremble.



## SERM. LXXXVI.

## Further Discoveries of what is required to a well-regulated Conscience, with Distinctions concerning it.

2 COR. I. 12.

*For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our conscience.*

**T**Here remain more particulars to be insisted upon, which are requisite to make a well-regulated conscience, whose testimony (you heard) is the cause of such unspeakable comfort. And

First, *There is in a peculiar manner necessary, the witnessing and sealing power of the holy Ghost to, and with our consciences.* The illumination and sanctification of Gods Spirit, is not enough to make our consciences speak fully and clearly, so as to have rejoycing thereby, unlesse the Spirit of God doth also bear witness with it. Hence we have them both put together, Rom. 8. 16. *The Spirit it self beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.* And therefore you heard, that Bernard understood this testimony of conscience in the Text, of a *Testimonium percipientis*, not *Perhibentis*; but they are both included. For our conscience cannot give any evidence, and sure testimony of the grace in us, unlesse inabled thereunto by the Spirit of God; and this is called, *The work of Gods Spirit sealing and witnessing with our spirits.* The Text is very famous, and greatly agitated in the controversy about the assurance of our sanctification and salvation. Grotius, and some others neglect the Preposition *cum*, and would have it no more than simply *unaptum*. But the word is not any where so used, the instances of Grotius are against him, Rom. 2. 15. For Conscience there is said to bear witness, *appropinquans*, in respect of God, and so doth relate to his testimony. We therefore conclude, That the Spirit of God is here said to bear witness with our spirit; only the difficulty is, How this is done? And

1. *It is not done by any external voice and sound made in the air, as Christ had, when it was said, This is my beloved Sonne.* Neither may we apprehend any immediate testimony by an extraordinary revelation, as some have pleaded for; but in a mediate way, partly by exciting and inabling of our spirits to call God Father, against that slavishness and servility, which is apt to bear us down; and partly by working in us those heavenly and holy qualifications, by which we do certainly gather, that we are the children of God. Indeed the Papists make the testimony of Gods Spirit, to be no more, as applied to particular subjects (though in it self they say, it is infallible) then a moral certainty by probable conjectures and signs. But this is derogatory to the Spirit of God, and taketh away all that Evangelical joy, and holy boldness, which we are allowed to have at the throne of grace.

What else is requisite to a well-regulated conscience.

1. The witnessing and sealing power of the Spirit with our consciences.

How the Spirit of God doth not witness with our consciences.

This



How it doth.

1. Effectively.

This witnessing then of Gods Spirit is two wayes:

1. *Effectively*, When it doth enable the conscience of man to cast off all legal terrors and tormenting fears, and so in serenity of spirit, to believe God is our Father. And for this end it is called, *The Spirit of Adoption*. For (alas) take the conscience of the most holy man, without this Spirit of Adoption. How legal and timorated is it? How slavish and unbelieving? Hence is it, that the people of God need so many instructions and informations. Hence is it, that they are often in prayers and groans unutterable, ere they can truly and cordially call God *Father*. They fear him as a Judge, and flee from him rather as an enemy. Even as if there be never such glorious and delightfull objects to refresh the eyes with; yet if a man be in the dark, he cannot take any pleasure therein. Thus many of Gods dear children, who walk with a tender conscience, who are diligent in all the wayes of holiness, yet have not this testimony of conscience to comfort them, it is hid from their eyes, only because the Spirit of God doth not enable them thereunto. Now the Apostle telleth us, 1 Cor. 2. 17. *It is the Spirit of God, whereby we know the things, that we have freely received of God.*

2. Objectively.

What are the effects of the Spirit by which our consciences are rightly guided in witnessing to us.

1. A purpose to leave all known sin.

2. The Spirit of God doth witness unto us *Objectively*, as I may so call it; and that is by some effects, and fruits of his grace upon our hearts, by which we gather, as by so many sure signes, that we are in the state of grace, and not hypocrites. But because this will come in more fully in the ensuing particulars; I shall only touch upon those effects by which the testimony of our conscience is rightly guided in witnessing to us. And

First, *By having a full and serious purpose to avoid all sinne, as it shall become manifested to us.* As David protested, *That he did hate every evil way*, Psal. 119. 104. He that doth allow and indulge himself in any known sinne, cannot have the testimony of this good conscience. It is true (as is to be shewed) there is no man living, though never so holy, but his conscience convinceth him of much sinne and many infirmities; and this maketh him so highly esteem Christ, and a Gospel-righteousness: but yet it doth not witness to him, that he liveth in the customary acting of grosse sinnes; if it doth, the Spirit of God never witnesseth with such a mans conscience, that he is the child of God. No, if thou livest quietly, without the smitings and condemnations of conscience, it is because it is stupid, and the Devil hath deluded and hardened thee; for Gods Spirit witnesseth with our conscience, and by this effect, that we have a tender respect to avoid all known sinne.

2. A zeal for the glory of God.

Secondly, Another effect is, *A zeal for the glory of God, to honour him, to magnifie Christ, and to set up his Kingdome, as much as we are able.* The more zeal and fervency men have had for Gods honour, the more powerfull testimony of a good conscience they alwayes enjoyed. As we see in this Paul, in his whole ministerial course, with what burning zeal did he flame forth continually? and on the contrary so much remissness, so much negligence and lukewarmness, so much is the abating of consciences testimony.

3. An holy confidence in our approachings unto God

Thirdly, *An holy confidence and boldnesse in our approachings to God.* And of this the Apostle speaketh, Rom. 8. *The Spirit of Adoption*; removing our fears, our unbelief, and dejection, raising us up also with an holy confidence and humble boldness, doth hereby testify with our consciences, that we are the children of God. Hence the more distrustfull fears, the more tormenting doubts that we groan under, the weaker and more feeble is the witness of our conscience; yea if those prevail and are predominant, then our conscience is set against us, and witnesseth against us; and then the child of God is in sad desertions, when his heart witnesseth against him, that he is an hypocrite, that he did serve the Lord without integrity. For though this be false, yet till Gods Spirit remove this darknesse, and fill thee with an Evangelical

cal



cal confidence, thou art not able to hold up thy head.

Fourthly, Another effect, by which Gods Spirit witnesseth with our conscience, is, *An unfeigned love to the brethren, a delight in all those that love God.* Where this is, that thou lovest godly men for their godliness sake, this demonstrateth thou art born of God, and hast the same Image in thee, as they have. And if thy love also extend to thy enemies, if thou findest that thou canst pray for them that curse thee, do good to them that revile, especially thou pitiest their souls, and wouldst be helpfull to them in the way to Heaven; though they are enraged adversaries to thee, and that without cause: By this frame of heart, the conscience doth give a full and precious evidence.

4. Love to the Brethren.

Fifthly, *In daily and faithfull exercises of self-denial in the wayes of God, doth the Spirit of God greatly assure the conscience.* In sufferings for Christ, in enduring the losse of name, liberty, and life it self for Gods cause, is the clearest testimony of our conscience. Hence the Martyrs had so much serenity of spirit, such unspeakable consolations, because they found they loved Christ, better than all things. As they gave a testimony to the word of God, called therefore *Martyrs*; so God also gave them a testimony within, whereby they did glory in tribulations, and triumph over all aduersaries. We see that if men suffer in false wayes, if they be Martyrs for the Devil, if they die for that which is highly offending God, they many times glory in the comfort they have from the testimony of their conscience. Now if a deluded conscience, if deluded joyes can do so much, what shall not the Spirit of God do, sealing and confirming his love to us, by our patient sufferings for him? Thus when happily the world doth witness against thee, wicked men they condemn thee, and lay many heavy accusations against thee, as the false Apostles did here concerning *Paul*, yet this testimony within will answer all, and God doth come in with fuller evidences of his love in such passages of self-denial.

5. Self-denial.

Lastly, The spirit of God doth witness to our spirit, in this blessed effect, viz. *When we do with delight and joy meditate, think and speak about heavenly things, when the Ordinances of God are matter of pleasure to us.* David doth often profess what delight he had in the Ordinances of God, how the word of God was more precious than gold, more sweet than the honey-comb. Now when the heart is thus affected to holy things, that they find more joy, as David professeth, *Psal. 4.* in the things of God, then worldly men do in their corn and wine, when these increase: By this excellent heavenly temper, the Spirit of God witnesseth with our conscience, that we are the children of God.

6. Delight in heavenly things.

But I shall enlarge no more on this, because the Doctrine of Assurance will follow upon the next words.

We shall now lay down some distinctions, to clear this truth to you, because it is plain, That many times the people of God being cast down with black thoughts, that cannot say with *Paul*, *The testimony of our conscience is our rejoycing.* And on the other side, many heretical, pharisaical and self-deluded persons, will at least outwardly boast of this. Therefore

Distinctions concerning the testimony of our conscience.

First, We may take notice, That there is a two-fold testimony of our conscience, which doth afford matter of rejoycing; either *particular*, as to some matter of fact, or one particular business, especially when calumniated by adversaries. Or secondly, *General*, which is to the whole frame of our heart, and our whole conversation. These two are greatly to be distinguished. For we see David in many places praying to God, *That he would reward him according to his innocency, and deal with him according to the righteousness of his hands:* and he doth many times appeal to God concerning his integrity. Now this was from a testimony of his conscience to a particular fact. *Saul*, and others did maliciously accuse him, laying to his charge things that he never did. Of this *Paul* speaketh

1. 'Tis either particular or general.



speaketh also, 1 Cor. 4. 2. *I know nothing by my self.* He did not matter those crimes that the false Apostles burdened him with, because his conscience did clear him, as to any grosse neglect in his ministerial course. Now you must know, that many a natural or moral man, may have in some cases this particular testimony of his conscience, and receive comfort from it, and yet be farre enough from the state of grace. How many persons in the world are slandered by some malicious adversaries, as guilty of such crimes, which are altogether false? Now happily thou art pure and free from them, thy conscience justifieth thee, and thou hast comfort from this; but this is not all which God requireth. Therefore there is a second testimony of the conscience, which is *General*, and that speaketh to the whole man, witnessing that thy whole conversation is unblameable, and that thy heart in the universal inclination thereof, is wholly for God, and against sinne. It is this general testimony that is the foundation of true comfort. A man may be free and innocent, as to some particular sinnes, and yet the state of his soule be in gall and bitterness.

2. It witnesseth either perfection or sincerity.

Secondly, *This testimony of the conscience even in general, witnessing unto thee thy state of grace, may be considered two wayes.* For either it may be supposed or expected, that it should testifie unto thee an heart and life free from all sinne, failing in nothing at all. Or else, *To witnesse sincerity and uprightness for the main, though failing in many things.* If then a Christian should resolve to take no joy, unlesse his conscience can witness perfection, and an immunity from any failings, such an one must resolve to have no comfort all his life time; but if it witness the main bent and frame of thy heart to be for God, though carried aside often through the violence and deceitfulness of temptations, from this thou mayest rejoyce. This is much to be observed; for why are the discouragements and disconsolateness of Gods own children so great, but because their conscience telleth them of several failings, and they desire some testimony of a perfection? Satisfie your selves therefore, and regulate your thoughts in this particular. And thus we must expound that place, 1 John 3. 20, 21. which at first appearance seemeth to speak very terribly, *If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.* This Text if not rightly understood, is enough like *Belshazzars* writing in the wall, to strike us with trembling. For is there any man living, whose heart doth not condemn him for sinne? Doth not this very Apostle say, 1 John 1. 8. *If we say we have no sinne, we deceive our selves, and no truth is in us?* If then we have sinne, how can our hearts but condemn us? And then God knowing our hearts, and seeing more evil and error in us, then we can understand, must condemn us much more. What is this then, but to fill every godly man with despair? But that the Apostle himself may not speak a contradiction, we must have recourse to the mentioned distinction, viz. That our hearts condemn us justly, for the main, that our foundation is rotten, that we love sinne more than God, then we have cause to be wholly cast down; but if our hearts do not condemn us for the main, only for those imperfections and frailties, which we cannot perfectly be purged from in this life, then we may have confidence towards God.

3. Conscience is either habitually enabled, or actually prepared to testifie.

Thirdly, *Our conscience may be considered as Habitually able to testifie, or as Actually and immediately prepared.* This is necessary to be observed; For every regenerate man having his conscience sanctified, is thereby habitually able to give a good testimony, but many things may intervene that hinder it in its actings. Even as the Sunne is able to give a clear light to the whole world; but clouds and mists may hinder the actual communication of it. And thus it is often with the children of God; their conscience is sanctified, but many doubts arise, many scruples and fears do interpose, so that they have not that actual

wit-



witness in their conscience which they might have. So that as in sanctification there are the principles of grace, though the exercise of them may be stopt: so it is in matter of consolation, there is the foundation and fountain of it, though the stream may be troubled. And this should make us wary so to walk, as not to put stops and checks in the way of conscience, especially to labour for a sound judgement, and a full perswasion in things to be done. For the more doubtfull and scrupulous we are, the less firm and clear is the testimony of our conscience, as appeareth, *Rom. 14. 22, 23.*

Fourthly, *We are to distinguish of the testimony of conscience, as alone and separate, or relating wholly to the blood of Christ, in whom alone all our acceptance, and cause of comfort is contained.* Whereas if a man should attend to the testimony of conscience alone, though to his best actions, he would have more cause to fear and tremble from that, then rejoyce. Therefore the Scripture attributeth the purging of our conscience to the blood of Christ, there is no mans conscience can be good and truly peaceable, that doth not look to Christ, that saith not with *John, Behold the lamb of God that taketh away thy sinne,* as well as behold the holy duties thou hast lived in. *Heb. 9. 14. How much rather shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead workes?* Let conscience then alwayes eye Christ; look to him as well as to our graces. For the goodness of an evangelical conscience lieth not in this, to testifie thou hast not been such a sinner, or thou hast not such failings; but though thou hast been such, yet repenting and believing through the blood of Christ, thy conscience is not to condemn thee for them, because pardoned. Now the conscience of a civil and pharisaical man, which comforts from works done, doth not at all relate to Christ; and by this thou mayest find the deceitfulness of it, seeing that by Christs blood alone it cometh to be truly purified.

4. The testimony of conscience is either alone or relating to Christ.

*Use 1. Of Instruction.* How few they are that have this right testimony of conscience within them, they have seared stupid consciences, or they have deluded ones, that make them trust in other things, then Christs blood. Do not most men rest in this, that their conscience telleth them they are baptized, they are made partakers of the Ordinances of God, and this is all the witness they have? But the Apostle *Peter* layeth an Axe to the root of this, *1 Pet. 3. 21. Baptisme saveth,* but then by a rhetorical correction addeth, *Not the putting away of the filth of the body, but an answer of a good conscience.* It is generally thought to be an allusion to a Covenant or contract (for so Baptism is) wherein the person is asked, *Do you take God for your God? Renounce the Devil, and all the lusts of the flesh?* Now if a man can unfeignedly, and with a good conscience answer that, he keepeth to baptismal ingagements, this will save.





## S E R M, LXXXVII.

*A Believer may be assured of the Uprightness of his Heart in the Performance of Duties. What is required to such an Assurance.*

2 COR. I. 12.

*That in simplicity and godly sincerity.*

**T**He third part of the Text, as it stands divided, cometh under our consideration; and that is, the *Declaration in particular*, of what was spoken in the *General*. The *General* was, *The testimony of his conscience*. Now he sheweth the *Specials*, wherein this is manifested, and that is set down, *Positively, and Negatively, and Oppositely*.

1. *Positively, In simplicity, &c.*
2. *Negatively, Not with fleshly wisdom.*
3. *Oppositely, But by the grace of God.*

Before we come to the particulars, and open the Greek words, we must take notice of the certainty and sure knowledge *Paul* had of his sincerity. For how could *Paul* glory and rejoyce in his sincerity, if he did not know it, yea so know it, that his conscience with the Spirit of God did witness it to him? And therefore this is one of those places, that is brought in the controversie between *Papists* and us, about the certainty of our being in the state of grace, which *Bellarmino* indeed would enervate. But his labour is in vain. For what can be clearer, then that *Paul* had a certain knowledge of his upright heart, seeing he did make this publick testimony of it, and take so much joy therein? Neither doth *Paul* in this pretend to any extraordinary revelation, as if he had some peculiar priviledge in this above others, as when he was rapt up into the third Heavens; but he avoucheth the testimony of his conscience, which must be in an ordinary way. From this we observe,

A believer  
maybe assured  
he performeth  
duties with an  
upright heart.

*That a Believer may have a certain knowledge, not only that he performeth those gracious duties God requireth, but that he doth them with an upright and sincere heart.*

*Paul* did not only know, that he was diligent in preaching of the Gospel, that he was faithfull in dispensing of the word of God, but also that all this was done with faithfull and sincere respects. We do not only know that we believe, that we repent, but that we do these things in the uprightnesse of our souls. *Bellarmino* urgeth this much, *Though we do discharge the duties God requireth, yet how can we know, that we do them with an whole heart, with a sincere spirit? Many hypocrites (say they) are sure. Yea (saith he) among the*



the Protestants, one is assured of his way, and another of another Sect, but we are assured that they are all deluded. So that he concludeth, Seeing all the Hereticks of this age boast of this certainty, yet (saith he) even in their opinion many are deceived, and in ours all are. But we are to walk by the Scripture-light in this case. And indeed this being a truth, the knowledge whereof is obtained both by Scripture and experience, the favoury work of grace, and sense of Christs Spirit dwelling in us, doth more to perswade of this truth, then voluminous controversies. This Question is best answered by diligent prayer, and an heavenly life; and therefore practical experimental Christians can speak more to this point, then the most learned speculative Doctors, unless they have a gracious broken heart, as well as a learned profound head. That a believer may be assured of the truth of grace, appeareth by several examples, and general assertions of Scriptures. Examples, as *Hekiah*, Remember, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, 2 King. 20. 3. In *Job*, who though under sad temptations both from God and his dear friends, who charged upon him hypocrisie, yet he would never let go the perswasion of his integrity. *David*, how often doth he profess his love of God with all his heart? *Peter*, when Christ asked him again and again, he answered, Thou knowest Lord I love thee, John 21. 17. As for those places, which affirm this truth, I shall name one or two, John 14. 17. Ye know the Spirit, for he dwells with you, and shall be in you. And vers. 20. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. What is clearer then? As where the Sunne is there is light to see it: so where the Spirit of God dwelleth and worketh in a man, there is an evident discovery of it. 2 Cor. 2. 11, 12. What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man within; even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God, that we might know the things freely given to us of God. By this we see, that as the soul by its rational powers doth discover and feel the workings of reason and understanding within it self; so also by those supernatural principles of grace infused into it, it is able to discern and feel the divine and heavenly motions of a supernatural life within him. The first Epistle of *John* doth in many places speak of this knowledge, whereby we perceive that God is in us, and we in him. But I intend not to enlarge on this subject.

Let us explain this truth, and consider, What is required to cause this certain knowledge in us, that we are sincere and in a state of grace, and so by consequent, that we are justified, elected, and shall assuredly be saved. And

First, There is required, A firm assent and faith of the truth of Gods promises, which are in the general revealed in the Word; as such as these, He that believeth, hath passed from death to life. By faith we have remission of sinnes through the blood of Christ. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdome of Heaven. The promises also to such as do confesse and forsake their sinnes, we are strongly to assure our souls of. Yea, not only the promises, but the whole truths revealed in Gods word, we are firmly to assent to by a vigorous faith. For the lively actings of faith to its general objects, do wonderfully conduce to the application of it to particular and special objects. As men of quick animal actions, are thereby more enabled to rational; for seeing what is in the understanding was first in the sense; the more expedite they are, the more vigorous is the understanding.

Secondly, There is required, A particular application of Christ and the promises to our selves by faith. For herein lieth the efficacy of faith, when with *Thomas* it saith, My Lord, my God: Or with *Paul*; Who loved me, and gave himself for me. For as the seeing of meat, though never so excellent

What is required to a certain knowledge of our being in a state of grace.

1. A firm assent to the truth of Gods promises and Word.

2. A particular application of the promises to themselves.



and wholesome doth not nourish, but the eating of it : So the beholding of Christ revealed in the Word, as a Saviour in the general, doth not justify and pardon, but the applying of him to be my Christ and my Saviour. For this reason faith is called, *John 6. The eating of Christs flesh, and drinking of Christs blood.* And the Sacrament of the Lords Supper doth require this particular applying act of faith ; and this is the foundation for our future knowledge ; till Christ be ours, we cannot know he is ours ; till Christ be received by faith to dwell in our hearts, we cannot perceive that he doth dwell there. Happily then the Apostle *Peter* exhorteth us, *2 Pet. 1. 5. To add to faith virtue* ; By that is meant the efficacy and liveliness of faith in receiving of Christ. And then to this we must add *knowledge* : Knowledge is to follow this efficacious application of Christ. Now this is the greater work of our faith, as to our justification. This is that which the Papists do so declaim against, and for which *Estius* calleth us *Specialistas*, Specialists. But certainly this is the acting of faith that maketh us rich, that bringeth Christ the treasure into our soul, and it is this, which the Devil doth so oppose in all the godly. Hence are all those fiery darts of *Satan*, all those sad and black aggravations of sinne, whereby the soul, like that woman with the bloody flux, is afraid and trembleth to come directly to Christ. It is that applying act of faith, that the Devil so diligently would keep thee off, whereas if thou didst but taste of this honey, as *Jonathan* ; or rather plentifully fill thy self with it, thou wouldst with much spiritual fortitude pursue and conquer all thy spiritual enemies. This was the blessed truth that our Reformers rescued out of Popery, being enabled thereunto by the word of God as a Rule, and the experimental work of grace upon their souls, as a sure witnesse to confirm them therein. But this is not all. Therefore to obtain this knowledge, there is required an *Internal sense and feeling* of the fit frame of our heart, whereby we perceive that we are such who do believe, and do love God, who do repent of our sinnes upon firme and pure grounds. For unlesse there be this inward discerning of what is in us, how is it possible to arrive at any certainty ? Now it is this that the Popish adversaries do most batter, supposing it to be the weakest part in the Wall. It is true (say they) we believe the Scripture that speaketh generally, *Whosoever believeth and repenteth, shall have his sins pardoned* : But when you come to the Assumption : But *I believe, I repent*, here you are subject to many mistakes, here you may be deceived. And certainly all hypocrites are deluded in this respect ; They make false applications to themselves ; through self-love they deceive themselves, thinking they have good hearts, when they have them not. But this doth not inferre, that the truly godly are therefore deceived ; no more then because an Heretick hath great confidence that he is in the truth, yet is deceived, it followeth that therefore the orthodox man is also in an error. Because men in a dream are deluded, doth it follow that men cannot tell, when they be indeed awake ? We must know then, That as we have a certain knowledge, by the bodily senses, we are certain we hear, we see : So the soul in her immaterial operations, hath a sense and feeling of them ; We feel, we know, we understand, we love, we delight. These internal motions of the soule are perceived, as well as the things of sense ; and to say, we may be decived here, and no truth can be discovered, is to turn all knowledge into *Scepticisme*, and to hold *Nihil scitur* ; yea that that also is not knowne, *That nothing is knowne*. And besides, it is directly against Scripture, *No man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man*, *1 Cor. 2. 11.*

This then being laid as a foundation, That a mans own spirit doth feel and percieve what are the motions thereof, it followeth, That when a man doth uprightly and sincerely love God, and walk in his way, he doth experimentally



mentally discern this he knoweth, he believeth, he knoweth he loveth God. But that this may be done, there is required,

First, *An humble broken heart, and poverty of spirit, whereby we are emptied of all our own righteousness, renouncing every thing that is ours, hungering and thirsting after Christ and his righteousness.* Every gracious heart that cometh to the knowledge of its sincerity, hath this concomitant disposition, there is an humble, lowly, broken spirit, it feeleth it self undone and lost. It feareth all that it hath done, and therefore can rest no where, but on Christ onely. Now although many do deceive themselves, many doe flatter and delude their owne soules, yet where there is this frame of heart, there will never be any miscarriage.

Secondly, Besides this brokenness of heart, there is required, *A regular and undistempered disposition in the soul.* For though the sense cannot be deceived about its proper object; hence is that saying, *Non est disputandum de gustu, We must not dispute about taste;* yet if the palate be diseased, nothing is more ordinary, than to judge that bitter which is sweet. And this falleth out sometimes to the choicest people of God; there are troublesome and disquieting temptations upon them, they are in blackness and sadness. Now in such a case, we are no more able to know what we are, than we can see our faces in troubled waters. So that this due and prepared qualification of the soul, must be alwayes present in the judging of our selves; As in all faculties, whether the intellective or visive, if they have any impediment in their operation, they cannot produce their convenient operations. The understanding in a mad man, and in a man fast asleep, is wholly hindered in its workings: So may the senses be either by some hurt upon the sensitive powers, or by the indisposition of the medium, or through the distance of the object. Thus it is in the soul when sanctified; there may be many distempers, several impediments, which may hinder it from passing a true judgement about its state; and therefore the advise of *Casuits* in such cases is, not to seeke for this assurance and evidence, but to put forth acts of faith by meere dependance and recumbance on the promises of the Gospel. Even as *David* and *Job* sometimes did: For *Job* saith, *Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him,* Job 13. 15.

Thirdly, This frame of heart whereby we are enabled to know our condition is alwayes accompanied with a *godly filial and holy fear.* That fear which is so often commanded in Scripture, and with which we are to worke out our salvation, Phil. 2. 12. It is true, there is a slavish, and servile feare, tormenting us with daily doubts, and this is properly expelled by this knowledge of our sincerity, and there is no greater enemy to an Evangelical and Gospel life, which is in faith, peace, and joy in the holy Ghost, then these tormenting doubts about our selves. And therefore the Papists who teach and encourage these doubtings, under the colour of humility, do thereby drive us from Christ. Yea *Luther* said, *If there were no other cause, then this, we had ground enough to depart from the Church of Rome.* But though this *Ishmael* must be cast out, yet not *Isaac* too. There is a lawfull fear, whereby as children we reverence God, are afraid of any frowne from him, and doe thereby diligently attend to all those duties he hath commanded; and this is necessary to beget a true knowledge of our upright hearts, and by this that rash presumption of *Epickures*, of impenitent and secure finnes, is wholly excluded; for they doe in a presumptuous manner indulge themselves in all finnes, having no holy fear in the godly use of all those means God hath commanded.

What is required to an experimental discerning of our graces.  
1. An humble heart.

2. A regular disposition in the soul.

3. A holy fear.



4. The help of  
Gods Spirit.

Fourthly, To enable the soul of a believer thus to know and be assured of its sincerity, there is above all required, *The helpe of Gods Spirit*. For the Texts above-mentioned doe attribute it to the Spirit of God dwelling in us, whereby we come to know what God hath wrought in us. It's the *Spirit of God which helpeth our infirmities* in prayer, and doth seale and witnesse unto us, that we are the children of God. Therefore though a godly mans soul be as fully bespangled with graces, as the firmament with starres; yet if the Spirit of God enable not to discern of these, we are in daily fluctuations of spirit. As *Hagar* had a fountain of water by her, but she was ready to perish with thirst, till God opened her eyes to see it. And as the Prophets man could not behold that great company which was on his side, till his eyes were inabled thereunto; so neither do we know what are the gracious workings of Gods Spirit in us, without this sealing witnesse of Gods Spirit. But of this more largely, when we come to the 22<sup>th</sup> verse in this Chapter. Now when all these are concurrent together, Doth the godly soul with a certaine knowledge conclude, that it is in a state of grace, and so justified with God. Whether this be a knowledge of faith, or of sense, or mixed of both, is disputed. But it seemeth to be the later. For as faith in the assenting act is carried out to principles clearly revealed in the Word. And then secondarily to conclusions by good and sure consequence deduced from them: So is faith in the fiducial actings of it to the promises, as laid downe in the general; and then to the same, as particularly applied; So that faith and experience concur to make up this certaine knowledge, a glorious and rare priviledge. For because men doe live so dissolutely and carelessly, because they doe so little exercise themselves in holinesse and close walking with God, therefore they thinke such a thing is impossible. Yea, because the people of God are so sensible of their infirmities, and constant weaknesses, they think it is no duty, but sinfull presumption, to believe any such thing concerning themselves. But in the next place we are to shew you, that it is a duty which we ought to presse after.

SERM.





## SERM. LXXXVIII.

*Of the Impediments which keep us from Assurance; Commands for it, and Cautions about it.*

2 COR. I. 12.

*The testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, &c.*

**T**He next thing to be pursued concerning the Doctrine already observed, viz. *That a believer may certainly know, that he doth not onely do the duties God requireth, but also that he doth them with a sincere and single heart.* The manner as well as the matter is manifested to him) is to shew our duty herein, that we are bound by Gods command, not to rest, till we come to some assured knowledge herein. Therefore of all the Questions in Divinity, thou art to study to exercise thy self most in this, *Whether doest thou know, that thou art in a state of grace, that thou art no hypocrite, no self-deluded wretch in the wayes of Religion, but that thou hast sincerity and truth in the inward parts?* How much more advantagious would it be to Christians, if they studied the resolution of this case more? It is strange that many can spend their time in disputes about either unnecessary things, or too sublime for their capacities, or such Questions, that they are not concerned in. And as for this, which is the main fundamental one, as to their particulars, be wholly negligent about it. Certainly a good resolution herein, is of so great importance, that we may wonder, that we do not lay all other studies aside; yea bid all other businesses stand aloof off, till the Spirit of God upon sure grounds, hath perswaded us herein. If your temporal estate were questioned; if all your livelihood were called into question, and it began to be doubtfull, whether the estate you enjoy were your own by the right of the Laws, or no; especially if others did sollicite and endeavour to take it from you: Would not this make you runne and ride night and day, till you had obtained such firm evidences, that all your adversaries could not invalidate? How then cometh it about, that we will thus desperately put the state of our souls to a venture; if I be regenerated, I am regenerated; if but a temporary believer, I am no more, I will put it to the event, let it fall out how it will? Oh the sad blindness and heavy judgements of men in this particular; and yet thou that livest thus doubtfully, and wilt die thus doubtfully. How uncertain is thy life? What a bubble and vapour art thou? Oh remember that the time is coming, that a godly ability to answer thy self in this doubt and temptation, will be more worth, then all the world, when thou art to be snatched from this world, to enjoy the comforts thereof no more, when thou apprehendest thy self summoned by death to stand at Gods Tribunal; where grace, and only grace through the blood of Christ, will be a sure plea. What agonies, what



The sudden coming of it will so greatly change, with death  
in a moment the most important to be a family of heaven in hell  
Out of self

What are the  
hinderances  
which keep  
men from  
looking after  
an assurance  
of their sincer-  
ity.

1. Self-fulness  
and presump-  
tuous security

what perplexities, what confusions will be upon thy soul? If thou criest out then, Oh I know not what I am, what will become of me, whether I am going; Live I must not, die I dare not! Oh that I could hear a voice from Heaven immediately witnessing unto me, that my spiritual estate is safe and good! Be sure that of all the Questions in the world, you will one day be put most to answer this, Not so much what knowledge you had, what gifts and enlargements you had, what not, what remarkable external duties you have done for God; but with what sincerity and singleness of heart, all this hath been performed? Therefore meditate on this lesson, as it were, every day be studying of it, to know all the practical mysteries about it. And as the Husbandman before he can sow his ground with corn must cut up the roots and bushes, which are in the way; so do thou. That thou mayest the better set thy self upon this duty of pressing after sure knowledge in this great matter, remove first, All those impediments and hinderances that keep thee from exercising thy self therein, and they are these,

First, *A self-fulness, and presumptuous security that thou art already in a good estate.* This is the condemnation and eternal ruine of many a mans soul, he will not so much as put it to the Question, Whether he be in a state of grace and salvation, or no; he will not so much as entertain one doubt about it? No, this is the way to bring him in despair; by this means he may have trouble and disquietness of conscience; he cannot live so jollily and securely as he doth: Therefore whatsoever Gods word, or the Ministry speaketh, though never so terribly about the deceitfulness of mans heart, that we delude our selves, taking that which is like grace for true grace, they matter it not; they will perswade themselves that their souls are in a good estate, and none in the world shall make them question it. Of all the men in the world, such secure confident spirits have the most cause to doubt and fear. Never to doubt, or search into thy heart, and to compare thy self with the Rule, is a very ill signe. To take all for granted thus concerning thy soul, and never to commune with thy own heart, is a great argument that thou art rotten in the foundation. Doth not the Wiseman observe it, as a general Rule, *Prov. 16. 2. The wayes of a man are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord pondereth the heart?* Though thou sayest with the Church of *Laodicea*, *Thou art rich clothed, and wantest nothing, yet God knoweth thou art poor, cursed and miserable.* God knoweth otherwise by thee, then thou dost. We charge it upon the Church of *Rome*, that she is incurable, because of this principle she holdeth, *That she cannot erre.* For if she would yeeld that, if she would grant happily for so many years they have been grossly deceived, then there would be some principles to proceed upon to reform them. So it is, if we meet with a man that confesseth his heart is deceitfull, his condition may be very miserable, though he hath applauded himself thus many years; if I may be found out not to have laid a good foundation about the work of grace, I would gladly be convinced of it; It is the great desire of my soul, not to be deceived about the nature of grace in me. There are fearfull and sad instances of hypocrites and temporary believers, therefore I would gladly be informed, Whether I came not too short as yet? Whether there be not a more excellent way then I have attained unto? This man is not farre from the Kingdom of Heaven; this man is in a way to be secured; But the self-righteous man, that supposeth himself good, it is the first principle with him, that he will never suffer to be questioned; this man is remediless as to humane appearance, Such a presumptuous man in practicals, is like an Heretick in doctrinals; and so after the first and second admonition, we may even reject, knowing that he doth willingly damne himselfe. Be sure then to take heed of this rock, at which so many have split themselves.

A se-



A second cause that must be removed, is, *A prophane carelesse spirit*; whereby men do not at all matter their souls, nor in what relation they do stand in towards God. If their bodies be well, if their worldly affairs prosper, then they say, *Soul, take thy ease*. But as for their spiritual condition, whether God be reconciled, or an enemy, whether yet they have been ever taken off that natural and cursed estate they were born in, they never look after it. Oh foolish and brutish man! If the Spirit of God shall once convince thee of thy sinfull and dangerous estate, of the curses of the Law which may fall upon thee every moment, then thou shalt have no rest day or night, till thou obtainest some assurance herein.

2. A prophane carelesse spirit.

The third cause is, *The over-greedinesse and importunate minding of our earthly businesses*. We rise with the world in our heart, and go to bed with it in our heart, so that we never set time apart seriously to think, how it is with us. Hence come those constant delays and procrastinations, promising our selves we will after such and such businesses are over, set our selves to the examination of our wayes; but still the work is not done, our dayes passe away, our hearts grow more hardened and indisposed every day, till at last death unexpectedly seizeth upon us, and then we would gladly have oil, when it is too late, then with *Esaie* we cry out for a blessing with tears and bitterness, but we come too late. How comfortable on the other side is it for a godly man dying, to say his soul hath been set in order long before, he hath not his evidences now to seeke? The knowing of his heart, hath beene all his study in his life time, *Satan* can object no new thing, which he hath not already thought upon.

3. Carking carefulness.

Lastly, There is another cause in the other extreame, which is to be removed, if we would arrive to this certainty, and that is, *To shake off all despairing and discouraging thoughts, as so many vipers fastened upon thee*. This valley must be exalted, as well as the other mountains levelled. Paper too much wetted as well as foul, receiveth no characters: So the heart sinfully dejected and disquieted, is indisposed for assurance, as well as the presumptuous one. For this reason we need the Spirit of God to seal us, and to confirm us: yea we need Gods Spirit more in this work of confirmation, then of illumination. Darknes and ignorance is sooner removed out of the mind, than unbelief and diffidence out of the heart. Do ye not see it thus often with the children of God, who are very tender in respect of illumination, are very quick and Eagle-eyed in respect of conviction, are wonderfully ingenuous to find out all the secret pollution and guile of their souls. But then for assurance and confirmation in the grace and favour of God towards them, they are exceedingly fearfull, and very weak. Therefore the believer must look upon slavish and disquieting fears, as adversaries to his peace, as well as presumptuous and secure thoughts.

4. Despairing and discouraging thoughts.

These impediments being thus rolled out of the way, the next thing he hath to do, is to *awe his soul with those Commands of God, that require us to get a certain knowledge of our estate*. For we see by the Popish objections, yea and of many others against this way, as if it did nourish security, as if it were the great wisdom of God to keep every man in this life uncertain about his spiritual estate, that so he may be kept in humility and fear: (I say) by such plausible objections as these are, a man hath made a good progress, that can despise them all, that is convinced it is his duty to press after this certain knowledge, and also that God hath promised to give his Spirit to work this in us. And that therefore if we complain of our fears and uncertain doubts we are to blame our selves, who like the people of *Israel*, do peevishly keep our selves in this wilderness, if we consider those places, which speak so universally, that God hath given his Spirit to all those that are his sons, whereby they are enabled to call him *Father*. Is it not disputed, Whether all that are truly godly have not

Of Gods commands to get assurance.



this certain knowledge, especially considering, how the first Reformers went very high this way. Hence is that expression of Calvin, which may startle the Reader, *Lib. 3. Institut. cap. 2. Sect. 16. Verè fidelis non est, nisi qui solidâ persuasione, &c.* He is not truly a believer, who being not persuaded by a solid persuasion, that God is a propitious and mercifull Father to him, from whose benignity he promiseth himself all things, who doth not upon the confidence of the promises of Gods good will to him, assuredly conclude of his salvation, which he repeateth again. But this will be better considered at *vers. 22.*

For the commands to this duty, I shall only commend two places unto you, *2 Cor. 13. 5. Examine your selves, whether ye be in the faith, prove your selves, know ye not that Christ is in you, except ye be deluded, men of an unsound mind,* that have no spiritual skill and experience to know, what is of God in you, and what of the Devil; what is of the Spirit, and what of the flesh and nature in you. Here you see this duty is commanded, and that earnestly with ingemination; and the Greek words do signifie, that the truth of grace, and the life of Christ in us, is not easily found out: We must take pains, and exactly distinguish; the bottom may be copper, when the superficies be gold. There are many resemblances of grace, which are not grace. That expression of Calvin is true, though so much abused by Papists, *Reprobi simili ferè modo efficiuntur, &c. (Calvin. Institut. lib. 3. cap. 2<sup>do</sup>. Sect. 11.)* That even some reprobates are affected almost with the same experimental sense and feeling as the elect are, and therefore they must have their senses exercised to discern between good and evil. As the Gemmary by his skill can find the difference between true metal and counterfeit.

The second Text is, *2 Pet. 1. 10. Wherefore the rather Brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure. Give all diligence* ] This supposeth, That the Christian who liveth carelessly and negligently, who is not fervent in spirit, and vigorous in the actings of holiness, is subject to many doubts and uncertain disputations about his estate. Now it would be a vain exhortation, to bid us, *Use all diligence* for the attaining of that which is impossible.

The effects of  
our souls.

This may suffice to shew it is our duty, and truly we may be the more encouraged in the pursuance of this, if we do consider the blessed and happy effects of such a certain knowledge of our selves. For

1. A quiet  
heart.

1. *Herely we shall live with a quiet, peaceable frame of heart.* David doth often profess the great tranquillity of his soul, *Pf. 4. That he will lay him down and sleep, because the Lord taketh care of him.* And Paul, *Rom. 8.* doth confidently triumph, *That nothing shall separate him from the love of God in Christ.* This is an Heaven upon the Earth. Oh the blessed estate of that man whose soul is alwayes on this Mount (as it were) of transfiguration! This man is alwayes safe in the haven, while others are tossed up and down with various temptations.

2. Spiritual joy  
and comfort.

2. *This peace doth also breed joy and unspeakable comfort, which the Gospel often doth speak of.* For want of this the people of God live not suitably to Evangelical principles; They walk as if they were to be justified by the Law, as if they were to look for righteousness by the Covenant of works: whereas we are to consider, that the Spirit of the Gospel, is the Spirit of Adoption, and that subdueth tormenting fears, and overcometh disturbing doubts, making him to rejoyce alwayes in the Lord.

3. Thankfulness

3. *This joy causeth Thankfulness, filleth the heart and mouth with Hallelujahs unto the Lord.* How can a child of God be thankfull for that which he questioneth, whether it be in him or no? The wonderfull effects of Gods grace converting of thee, and discriminating thee from those millions of persons that on thy right hand, and left hand fall into hell, should overwhelm thee by amazing thoughts thereat. But all this goodness and free grace of God is neglected, not taken



take notice of, whilst thou fittest in the darkness, and feelest no light.

Lastly, *This will be a great quickner of thee in the wayes of holinesse.* This will be wings and legs, and all to thee. *The joy of the Lord is your strength,* Neh. 8. 10. If then thou complaine of thy barrenness, thy deadneis and lukewarmness in holy things, examine, whether this be not the root that lieth undiscernably under ground (as it were) that causeth all thy unprofitableness? The Devil he labours to cut these Conduit-pipes, that would convey all consolation to thee. It's against sense and experience to say, This certain knowledge will breed laziness, and carnal confidence; as if the Sunnes beams would cause coldness. No, it cannot be. Who laboureth more abundantly than *Paul*? Who was more active in the wayes of godliness, being like a spiritual *Joshua*, subduing all the enemies of the Gospel before him? And did not the love of Christ, which he felt in his bosome thus constrain him? Only take a Caution or two to prevent mistakes.

1. *This certain knowledge is never so glorious, that it removeth all doubts and temptations; neither is it alwayes permanent and abiding in us.* The people of God have their nights, as well as dayes; and the Devil is not only watchfull to deprive believers of their graces, but also of their consolations. Therefore be not discouraged, if thou find the flesh combate against the Spirit in the way of comfort, as well as of duty. Caut. 1.

The second Caution is, *That although our constant and strict walking be not the cause of our assurance, yet it is maintained and preserved in the lively exercise of grace.* *To him that overcometh, I will give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which none knoweth but he that hath it.* These are allegorical and allusive expressions, to declare the assurance that God giveth to his; but all this is, *To him that overcometh.* If sin prevail over thee; if the world and the Devil entice thee off from God, then expect not to have this mercifull refreshment, as thou usest to have. This assurance is like the *manna* that fell in the wilderness, refreshing the *Israelites* in their extremities. It is the *hidden manna*, alluding to that which was kept in the Ark that might not be seen. It is the *new name that none knoweth, but he that hath it.* So that it is the sincere practice of godliness, that maketh us to believe this truth; he that hath it cannot declare it to another, when prophane scoffers by derision bid us demonstrate and prove that we have it. This cannot be no more than you can perswade a man honey is sweet, unless he do eat of it. These Cautions observed, then wrestle and strive with God, for the Spirit of God, that adopting and sealing Spirit: Say, Lord, thou hast given me grace, give me also the assurance of it. How can I praise thee, how can I glorifie thee, while unbelief doth shut up my mouth? Caut. 2.





## SERM. LXXXIX.

## Of the true Nature of Godly Simplicity and Singleness of Heart.

2 COR. I. 12.

*That in simplicity and godly sincerity, &c.*

**H**AVING finished the general, we now come to the particular, wherein his conscience did give this good testimony; and that is concerning his conversation in the world. Of which in its time. Which is amplified (as you heard) in the manner of it, *Positively, Negatively and Oppositely. Positively*, and that is set down in two words, *In simplicity*, and *Godly sincerity*.

Of the first at this time, ἐν ἀπλότητι. The Vulgar Latine addeth *heart*, *In singleness of heart*, for so we find it used in other places, *Ephes. 6. 5. Colos. 3. 22.* But that is supposed in the word, though it be not expressed. *Grotius* speaketh of a Manuscript that readeth ἀγνότητι, but the Context is clear for this.

Now when he saith, *In simplicity*, by that he meaneth, he did nothing craftily, crookedly, hypocritically, deceitfully, as *Chrysostome* interpreteth it in many synonymous words. *Varinus* maketh the contrary to ἀπλως, πόμπη, πλῆτερος, δαίμων, ὁπταίος, &c. almost the same words *Chrysostome* hath. The word is often used for *bounty* and *liberality*, as *2 Cor. 9. 11, 13.* because those who have a single plain spirit, are hearty, ready and free in all duties that are required. It differeth from the next word εὐλαβεία, because that doth properly respect the aims and intentions of men in all their wayes; although we are not to be too exact in making a distinction between them. This *simplicity* is as much as *sine plicis*, that which is *smooth and plain*, that hath not many folds and coverings, and so is opposite to that which is in the Old Testament called *an heart*, and *an heart*, a man that hath *two hearts*. So that this is a most blessed temperature of the soul, when its internals and externals are both alike; when its inwardly towards God, what it outwardly pretends to be. From whence observe,

Godly simplicity and singleness of heart affords much comfort

*That godly simplicity and singleness of heart, doth afford much comfort.*

The hypocritical and crafty self-seeking man, that maketh use of God and holy things for his own advantage and interest, hath never any solid true comfort. He is compared to the *rush that groweth in the mire*, and if plucked from thence, quickly withereth, *Job 8. 11.* An hypocrite will not serve God, but where his own advantages do induce him; for hypocrisy is large, and so contrary

ry



ry both to simplicity and sincerity. The Apostle doth excellently comfort himself in this; and thereby appealeth to the consciences of the *Thessalonians*, *1 Thess. 2. 3.* *Our exhortation was not of deceit or guile, neither used we flattering words, or a cloak of covetousnesse, nor of men sought we glory.* Oh the admirable simplicity that here we find in *Paul's* spirit!

Now it is necessary to consider the nature of this. And

First, *It floweth from an heart sanctified and truly regenerated.* No man but he that is godly, hath this singlenesse of spirit. *Jer. 17. 9.* *The heart is deceitfull above all things.* The word signifieth the crookedness of it: How ready it is to supplant us. *Jacob* had his name from that root, because he supplanted *Esaue* about his birthright. This is the heart of man by nature, full of concavities, secret recesses and holes (as it were) deceiving himself and others; and therefore till grace doth make pure, and we have truth in the inward parts, all is but a lie in us: Our Religion is a lie, our goodness is a lie, there is no solidity at all. It is true indeed, there is in some men a natural ingenuous candour, they abhorre dissimulation and hypocrisie; but yet this is onely one of *Aristotles* virtues, which is indeed but a splendid vice. For if the tree be not good the fruit cannot be: If the spring be bitter, so is the stream; and so if a man be a thorn, no sweet grapes can grow upon him. This then we are to do, to look to the bottom, to search to the original. Hath the Spirit of God made thee a new creature? then thou dost become faithfull and true both to God and man; otherwise we see what the Scripture speaketh of every one by nature, that he is a liar, *Rom. 3. 4.* Therefore till the heart be purified by grace, there is no truth and soundness within.

Secondly, *This simplicity and singlenesse of spirit doth eye God, and looketh upon his will, as the motive of his duty.* The presence of God, the omniscience of God, whereby he trieth and searcheth the heart, is frequently in his meditation. It is the glory of God, the honour of God, that stirreth up his heart: It's not glory from men, or pleasing of men, which doth quicken him up. For although we told you, the next word signifieth purity of intentions, yet one is so intimately connexed with the other, that they cannot be separated; singleness then of heart is remarkably seen in those motives that move his soul; they are arguments drawn from God. You see this fully comprehended in that exhortation to servants, *Colos. 3. 22.* where they are commanded, *To obey their masters, not with eye service, as men pleasers, but in singlenesse of heart, fearing God.* They must look above Masters and Governours, even to God himself. Now we are all servants to God; and therefore we ought the more diligently to have singleness of spirit towards him, by how much he doth infinitely exceed all other masters. And this particular doth likewise shew, that all the moral ingenuity and verity which some *Heathens* have been famous for, was but a glistening Glow-worm; for they had no eye to God, neither did they respect him, but looked at their own glory and honour in all that they did.

Thirdly, *Simplicity of heart is essentially consisting in the fixednesse of it upon God onely, when the heart doth in the chiefeft manner close with God, and center upon him, as the ultimate end through Christ.* And therefore simplicity of heart is the same with onenesse of heart. When a man doth not love God, and the world too, serve God, and lusts also. For though our Saviour say, *This is impossible*, yet many whose whole souls are engaged to the world, and the things of the world, do yet please themselves, as if they loved God also, which yet is as impossible, as with one eye to look downwards, and another to look upwards. That heart and heart which some Kings in the Old Testament are charged with, was, because they did halt between God and *Belial*; They would not serve God alone. Simplicity then

Of the nature of godly simplicity.

1. It flows from a sanctified heart.

2. It looks upon Gods will as the only motive to obedience.

3. It is fixed upon God onely.



is opposed to inconstancy and unsettlednesse of spirit, when a man doth not with full purpose of heart cleave to Christ, and take him upon all his terms, but in some things is for him, and in some things is against him: At some times he prayeth and calleth upon God; at other times again he giveth all over. This is opposite to singleness of heart. The Apostle James calleth such an one, Chap. 1. 8. *A double minded man, discomfited, a man with two soules*, as it were. So that this very particular is greatly to be heeded, it will penetrate and search to the very bottome of the soul. Most men undo their soules in this point; they have but wishings and wouldings in religious things; they have aguish workings of heart, sometimes hot, and sometimes cold: They have not taken our Saviours counsel, *To sit downe, and bethink themselves, what it will cost them to be the Disciples of Christ*, what lusts they can part with, what sufferings they can endure, what powerfull and fervent service they can doe for God: And hence it is they are like a reed shaken with every winde. Instability and inconstancy cannot in a predominant manner consist with this simplicity of heart, no more than heat and cold *in gradu intenso*. There is no godly man but bewaileth the unsettlednesse, the unevennesse of his heart, that he is not alwayes as believing, as heavenly-minded, as weaned from the world, as he is at some times; but this is gradual only, his heart hath for the main fixed on God, though it be thus tossed up and down; even as the ship may be anchored fast to the earth, yet the waves and winds may move it up and down, but they cannot remove it. Thus the heart which hath godly simplicity, is fundamentally fastened upon Christ, although many temptations intruding may sometimes cause it to shake and totter.

4. It is not compounded.

Fourthly, *Simplicity of heart is consistent in the uncompounded frame thereof*. It is not made up of several heterogeneousals, as if there were metal of silver and lead, or gold and copper, and so is the same with purity. Every hypocrite hath a mixt heart, it is compounded of several ingredients; for being it is glewed to the creatures, and to several lusts, because these are many; therefore he hath not a simplicity, but multiplicity in his heart. Divines doe usually make simplicity to be one of Gods Attributes, because he is a most pure act compounded of no parts: Therefore he hath the highest simplicity in his Essence. And the Angels, they are also called *simple substances*, because they are next unto God. Yea the Philosophers call the *Heavens*, though a body, yet *simple*, because not compounded of elements, as sublunary things are. The notion then of the simplicity of the heart is seen in this, when it is not compounded, it hath not the mixture of other things with spiritual: and hence it doth appear, that no man in this life hath perfect and absolute simplicity; none hath his graces wholly pure, because some corruption is mingled with our duties. There is a composition of wine and water, of flesh and Spirit, of Grace and Nature in the best, but yet it is not predominant in the godly. The tares do not choake the wheat. The *Iebusite* doth not drive out the *Israelite*. Onely this may serve to keep the godly humble and low in their owne eyes; they have not that purity and singleness of heart they ought to have, yea and earnestly desire. Doeſt thou ever goe about any holy duty, wherein thou doeſt not find corruption presently intermingling it self? Doth pure grace work alwayes? How much of flesh and self doth interpose? But yet for the main thy heart hath simplicity.

5. 'Tis uniform in its obedience.

Fifthly, *Simplicity consisteth in an even, equal and uniforme way of obedience*. The course of a mans life is for the general of the same complexion; alwayes praying, alwayes believing, alwayes mortifying of sinne, alwayes heavenly mindednesse. I doe not speak this, as if there were never any



any interruption, sometimes natural, as in sleep; and otherwayes, because the soule being finite, cannot attend to many things at once; sometimes moral by sinne; or at least carelesse and dull affections, but the course of his life, or as the Scripture calls it, *The way of a man*, that is, generally of the same consonancy: Whereas Hypocrisie is full of uneven and unequal actions, sometimes mountaines, sometimes valleys. There are many *Hyperbatons*, (as it were) in the oration of his life; his life doth speake in different Dialects; he can say *Sibboleth*; and *Shibboleth* too. Thus *David* describeth the godly man, as *Meditating and delighting in the Law of God day and night*. And the Apostle *John* speaketh once or twice, *That those who are borne of God, sinne not, neither can they*: Not because they have not divers infirmities, but because the full purpose, and habitual inclination of such a mans heart is uniformly to Gods commands. Therefore you heard, that the opposite to *ἀπλως*, is *πλυτεσθ*. If you looke upon many examples of those, who did many things for God, yet wanted this simplicity, you shall finde a great difformity in their lives; their lives speake contradiction, they are not the same men at one time, they are at another. Thus *Saul* at first very zealous to promote the will of God; yea from this he did put all the Witches to death, and yet at another time he himself makerh recourse to such. So *Jehu*, how active is he to destroy *Baal's* worship, but yet he retaineth *Ieroboam's* worship? If it was good to destroy *Ahab's* worship, because not commanded by God, was it not also good to demolish *Ieroboam's*, seeing that also had no command from God? But where there is no simplicity of heart, you may observe a great deal of unevennesse, yea and contradiction in that mans conversation.

Sixthly, Simplicity of heart doth mainly lie in this, *To have our outwards and inwards all of the same nature*. To be such cordially and internally to God, as outwardly we appeare to be. So that if you aske, What is this simplicity? In the general we may say, the adequate conformity and agreement betweene the heart and our profession. Out of the heart, we pray, we heare, we professe. So that a godly man can more securely make that wish, than the *Heathen*, who wished, that he had a window in his breast, that all men might see what he thought, what laie in his heart; This was great confidence. For certainly if God should take a man, as he did *Ezekiel*, and make a man look into the secret corners of many mens soules, we should see every day more abominations. A man of this godly simplicity careth not if other men knew his heart, because God, whom he feareth more than man, knoweth all the motions of his soul. It is the complaint that God maketh of some by the Prophet *Isaiah*, Chap. 29. 13. *This people draw nigh me with their mouth, and with their lips they honour me, but remove their hearts farre from me*. This is to have a double heart, such want this godly simplicity. But oh the lamentation and bitter mourning that we may take up in this respect! Have not most of our Congregations this *double heart*, and this *double tongue*? For what contrariety is there betweene thy religious approaches, and thy ordinary actions? Are ye not here to day, as if ye were an holy people, a repenting people, as if you did owne and acknowledge the Lord in all his commands? But what are you in your shops, in your markets, yea it may be in ale-houses, and such places, that doe foment iniquity? What grosse double dealing is this with God? You have a tongue to pray to God here, and then you have a tongue to curse and swear after. You appear here to day for the service and honour of God, and then in the week-day you serve the Devil and the world. What impudent hypocrisie is this?

6. Its outwards and inwards are all the same.

Will



Will God be thus grossely mocked by you? What doth not God remember? Is he an Idol-god? Oh yeeld your selves up to that exhortation of the Apostle, before Gods wrath consume you, and you cannot escape, *James*, Chap. 4. 8. *Cleanse your hands ye sinners, and purifie your hearts ye double-minded?* Your hypocrisie and dissimulation is so grosse and vile, that did not the Devil exceedingly blinde you, you could not but take notice of it; it would rise up in your consciences, and sting like a Scorpion.

7. It doth not cover any sin.

Seventhly, Simplicity of heart is seen in this, *That it dare not hide or cover any sinne, or mince it, and by distinctions lessen it as much as may be.* You heard *simplex* is *sine plicis*: It is a metaphor from garments that have not folds in them, you may see what they are. *Saul* did exceedingly discover the guile of his heart, when he did so mince his sinne to *Samuel*, and did pretend sometimes necessity, and sometimes religious respects to God; whereas *David*, though for a while he had too much of this double heart in him about *Uriah's* matter, yet at last he confesseth all, *Psal.* 51. *Against thee, against thee onely have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.* It was because the eye of God was upon him, that he was so much troubled; it was because he had used so much fraud and cunning in accomplishing his iniquity, that he was wounded at the very heart; therefore saith he, *Create in me a right spirit, and thou desirest truth in the inward parts.* When a man once cometh to this simplicity of heart, he will justifie God, and condemn himself, he will confesse to God, hide nothing from him, deal plainly with him; not with *Adam's* excuse or put it off to others; he will say, I am the man, I charge my self with all that evil, and all the aggravations of it, that the Scripture requireth.

8. It makes a man free in the service of God.

Eighthly, Simplicity of heart *maketh a man wonderfull free and willing in the service of God.* It doth not limit and stint his worke to God suitably to his own advantages, but his *Modus diligendi Deum est sine modo*, his measure is to put no measure. Therefore all those who love not strictness, zeale, fervency and activity for God, they discover much unsoundnesse of spirit. Were thy heart single for God thou wouldst strive forward, and forget all things that are behind. This is the reason you heard, why the Greek word *ἀπλοτης* is many times used for *bounty* and *liberality*, because he who hath a plain heart for God, he doth not walk by politick rules, and precepts of humane moderation, but conformeth to the rule with as much exactness and zeal as he can.





## SERM. XC.

*A further Discovery of the true Nature  
of Godly Simplicity both towards God and  
Man.*

2 COR. I. 12.

*That in simplicity and godly sincerity.*

**W**E are treating upon this special grace of *simplicity*, which doth afford unspeakable comfort to him that enjoyeth it. There remain more particulars to declare the nature of it. And

First, *Where this simplicity is, there is an humble submission of the mind to the truths of God revealed in believing of them, and an obediential resignation of the will to the commands of God, without cavils and forward disputations.* In this particular, the grace of *simplicity* doth triumph. Although to speak properly *simplicity* and *sincerity* are not so much a distinct specifical grace, as a qualification and modification of the powers of the soul, and their operations. In these two chanel of *faith* and *obedience*, *doctrine* and *duty*, *simplicity* doth greatly discover it self. We can neither believe soundly, or walk holily without this. For the former, it is plain, that seeing the truths of Christianity are made known to us by divine Revelation, and therefore are above reason (though not contrary to it) there is no such requisite to believe, as a *simplicity* of the mind, whereby we do acquiesce upon the authority of the Word, never curiously disputing and cavilling, how it can be. This the Apostle calleth *Calumniating every thought*, 2 Cor. 10. 5. And herein Christianity differeth from Philosophy; the later requireth science by disputes and discourses; the former requireth an humble assent to the testimony, affirming such a thing to be so. So that we may say, It's the want of this simplicity of the mind that maketh so many absurd and damnable heresies in the Church. What causeth the *Socinian*, the *Arminian*, but the want of this humility of mind? It is said to be the Embleme of *Nazianzen*, *Theologia nostra est Pythagorica*, *Our Divinity is pythagorical*; as amongst *Pythagoras* his Disciples *autus eia*, was enough to silence all disputes, So much more ought this amongst Christians to quiet all disputations, *The Lord hath said it, Christ hath spoken it, Thus it is written.* But how sadly may we lament, to see all Divinity turned into *Quaeres*, and *Utrum's*, *videtur's quod sic*, and *videtur's quod non*? How is this holy simplicity in believing laid aside, and rational scientificall inquisitions advanced, as if now the just were to live by reason, not by faith; as if reason were the *substance of things hoped for*, and the *evidence of things not seen*? Certainly this maketh men so uncertain, so inconstant, they look not after faith; which as the *Schoolmen* well say, is not only *apprehensiva*, but *quietativa*, not only *apprehensiva*, but *quietativa*; it brings the soul to its center, to its *non ultra*; whereas reason doth but *satisfie*, till a man come with a stronger; and one argument like the

More propositions of the nature of simplicity.

1. It humbly submits to the truths of God.



circles in the water begets another. So that whereas it was *Julian's* objection against the Christian Religion, as low and contemptible, because it was *μὴν οὐκ ἐπιστάμενοι, only believe*; yet this indeed is the glory of it; this setteth and composeth, when philosophical ratiocinations did carry them into endless contentions. Therefore that is good counsel of *Austins*, *Noveris te esse fidelem, non rationalem*. It is faith, not syllogisms, that brings an established mind in Religion. It is true indeed, Christianity hath her use of Reason and Arguments, and there is an *Habitus Theologiae*, whereby we do demonstrate the points of Divinity; but this is, when faith hath laid the foundation, *Fides facit argumentum, non argumentum fidem*, as it doth in the liberal Arts: Reason buildeth upon Faith, not Faith upon Reason. If therefore thou complainest of the diversity of Sects, of the multitude of opinions that swarm every where, there is no such way to escape splitting thy soul at such rocks, as to pray for this godly simplicity of mind. I say *holy simplicity*, not a foolish, popish, blind obedience, that is not faith. The fool believeth every thing: Faith hath alwayes an evidence, and knowledge of the testimony, though the thing believed may be above the comprehension. But when truths out of the Scripture are with sufficient evidence held out to thee, then *simplicity* is required to yeeld firm assent thereunto, and not to dispute by humane arguments, whether it can be so, or no. Therefore the wisdom which is from above, *Jam. 3. 17.* is said to be *εὐπειθής, easily to be persuaded*; As in respect of the objects to be believed, and the instruments who propound it, there is necessary, *Piscatoria simplicitas*, which is more than *Aristotle's* subtilty, or his *Minutiloquium*, as *Tertullian* calleth it. So there is such an humble simplicity required on the subjects part, who are to receive these divine truths. I am the larger on this, as being assured the best antidote against all heresies, and the surest remedy to preserve from doctrinal Apostasie, is this *simplicity of mind*. But

2. It submits to the commandments of God.

Secondly, This simplicity is no lesse signally seen in the *Will*, which is to cast away its contumacy, stubbornness and propriety, resigning it self wholly up to Gods command. The Lord hath commanded it, therefore I obey, not disputing with flesh and blood, whether this will be for my advantage, honour or profit; but the will of God boweth him into all ready compliance. It is the Apostles advice, *Phil. 2. 14.* *Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be sincere*. Here it is plain, that sincerity is manifested, when we willingly do our duty, not murmuring and quarrelling at it. Even as we read of *Abraham*, though commanded by God to sacrifice his own sonne with his own hands, when he might have had so many fair arguments against it, yet he readily applieth himself to his duty; and so when commanded to come out of his own countrey, and to go he did not know whether, yet he willingly obeyeth; this is *simplicity*. And so it was with *Paul*, *Galat. 1.* who immediately obeyed the call of God, *Not consulting with flesh and blood*; whereas *Saul*, because he did not obey in *simplicity*, but waved the commands of God upon religious pretences, his rebellion was accounted as *witchcraft*, not believing that *Obedience was better than Sacrifice*, *1 Sam. 15. 22.*

3. It boldly reproveth sin.

Thirdly, This simplicity is seen in an *holy boldnesse to do our duty, to be zealous for God, to reprove sinne, though there be never so many Lions in the way*. It is true, the wisemen of the world call this *simplicity* indeed, making it the same with *folly*. Thus most of our Christian duties, if fervently and zealously performed, are nothing but folly and silliness to carnal policy. But to appear for God, and to own his wayes among a crooked and malicious people, is an excellent mark of *simplicity*, whereas hypocrisie measuring all things by its safety, honour and profit, becometh like the shadow to the body, sureth it self to every corrupt humour of others. But this plainness of heart maketh us with *David*, *Psal. 119.* to speak of the Law even before Kings, and alwayes to obey God



God, rather than men. So much shrinking from thy duty, because of the fear or favours of men is so much want of simplicity. Hence *Varinus* makes ἀπλοτης the same with ελευθερία, boldnesse and freedom. Oh then pray exceedingly for this simplicity of spirit, that will make thee constant, bold and zealous for God! How often may thy conscience convince thee, that sinfull fear, or foolish shame, or carnal affections have made thee not do these duties with singleness of heart, as thou shouldst have done? How many times hast thou betrayed the truth, by sinfull silence? How many times hast thou wounded thy spirit, by holding thy tongue, whereas this holy simplicity would have imboldened thee? It is true, there is Christian prudence required also, there must be the wisdom of a Serpent, as well as the innocency of the Dove. Discretion is the salt to season our Sacrifices, and there must be this salt, as well as the fire of zeal; but we must look the Serpent doth not eat up this Dove; that discretion doth not devour this simplicity.

Thus much of simplicity, as it relateth immediately to God. Now because the Apostle useth the word largely, relating to his ministerial conversation, as it did reach to men, we shall take in briefly the consideration of that also. And

First, Godly simplicity maketh a man inoffensive to men. This simplicity maketh a man harmlesse and unblameable, as to others. Christs Disciples are compared to Sheep, not to Bears for cruelty, or Foxes for craft in doing mischief; therefore ἀπλοτης is as much as ἀνομία. The Apostle saith, *I would have you simple in malice*, Rom. 16. 19. The leaven that was forbidden in the Sacrifices did signifie malice and sourness. So that where this simplicity is, a man is wonderfull harmlesse, is not injurious, doth no wrong. The word used in that place of Rom. 16. 19. is ἀκραις, which though it properly come from κρηνη, yet some make it from κρηνη, as if to say, without horns. The people of God are meek and lowly, as it's said of Jacob, *He was a plain man*, but Esau rough and hairy; which may relate to their manners, as well as bodily constitutions; not but that they can be as bold as Lions in the cause of God. Simplicity is consistent with zeal and courage for God. Moses was the meekest man upon earth, yet in the case of Idolatry, and the peoples uncleanness, how forward was he to have severe punishment inflicted on the offenders?

Secondly, This simplicity of spirit in reference to man is accompanied with ingenuity, candour and truth. His heart and his words, his promises and his hands go along together. And therefore ἀπλος, is made the same with ἐκθαλας, a man of a transparent breast, that doth abhor all lying, cosening, and a double tongue. How carefull is the Apostle towards the end of this Chapter (and something this Text is relating to that) to clear himself from inconstancy and falshood, as if he were yea and nay? So that simplicity is accompanied with verity in affections, and veracity in promises. There is a conformity between the mind and words. The Jesuite by his principles of equivocation, calling it prudens desentio, is farre from this simplicity the Apostle here doth rejoyce in. Aristotle, (lib. 4. Ethic. cap. 17.) maketh this verity to be a moral virtue, though he saith the Greeks have no name for it, he placeth it in the middle between two extreams, the one is ἀλαζονεια, when a man doth boast and brag of such things in him, which are not indeed. Thus the Pharisee and the civil man, yea Aristotle himself for all his moral Philosophy, were guilty of this arrogancy, attributing that to themselves, which was not in them. Simplicity giveth all to God, nothing to his own power. The other extream is ψευδεια, when men do dissemble the good things that are in them, will not own them. Aristotle maketh Socrates guilty of this. Now it's true, there may be much hypocrisie in dispraising our selves; and we may affect humility, when thereby we exalt our pride. So that the child of God which hath this simplicity, is bound to acknow-

Of simplicity towards men.

1. It makes a man blameless as to others.

2. It is accompanied with ingenuity and truth.



ledge the good things God hath done for him, and in him; it is not pride but thankfulnesse to do so. *Paul* did not arrogantly boast, when he professeth his *simplicity*; it was not pride to own his sincerity. And this is necessary for the godly to be informed in; for they are so jealous and suspicious of themselves, that they dare not say, they feel what they do feel. If Christ should ask them as *Peter*, *Lovest thou me?* They would stand amazed, not knowing what to say, when yet at the same time all their trouble is, because they love Christ no more, and because they do not arrive at such a pitch of holiness as they desire. Know then, as *Aristotle* by the light of nature, so much more a *Christian* by the light of grace may conclude, that it is a sin, contrary to that simplicity that should be in us, not to acknowledge what God hath done for us. Thus *Hezekiah* pleaded the truth of his soul; and *Paul* here, and also in many other places, professeth his uprightness of heart, and abundant labouring for the propagation of the Gospel; neither could they be charged with pride and arrogancy herein. By which we see, that as a man in the simplicity of his heart is carried out to the whole service of God; so he doth herein take notice of, and acknowledge the grace of God towards him. Therefore it is our duty to observe, and thankfully acknowledge the graces of God in us, provided alwayes we avoid those particulars, which *Carthusian* mentioneth, *Lib. 2<sup>d</sup>. dist. in a verse*, that do alwayes pollute or puff up.

*Ex se, pro meritis, falso, plus omnibus inflat.*

1. That we do not think we have these good things by our own power and ability. 2. That it is not for any merit, or desert of ours, that God giveth us grace, and passeth others by. 3. That we do not falsely boast of such things, as are not indeed in us. 4. That we do not *Pharisaically* preferre our selves above others. These four things do overthrow the very foundation of many popish principles.

Use 1.

From these things thus declared, there is, first an *Use of Instruction*, by way of *Corollary*, viz. *That godly simplicity is not natural simplicity, or meer childishnesse.* God for many ends causeth some to be born natural fools and ideots, such are not excluded from salvation. God may have his wayes unknown to us of reaching home to their hearts, and infusing grace into them. But this simplicity is that which doth consist in subduing the guile and hypocrisie that is in mans heart, whereby we are prone to do the things of God for sinister respects, and thereby lose our spiritual reward. Again, Much more doth this *Christian simplicity* differ from *sinfull and affected simplicity*, when men by their lazinesse and negligence attain not to any sound knowledge in Religion. How many simple old persons are there, that have lived many years in this world, and yet know no more than a child about the principles of Religion? Yea every wicked man is often by *Solomon* called the *simple one*; and therefore wisdom doth earnestly invite them to forsake this folly. Thou that art apt to censure the generation of such as fear God, as so many weak simple persons, they are very contemptible in thy eyes. Oh remember, that all impiety is grosse simplicity: You are the Devils fools, for his bables you lose a crown of glory. In Hell, when it is too late, you will then rage and rave to see what fools you have been, when you shall see those despised ones received into glory, and you cast into eternal torments.

Use 2.

*Use 2. Of Admonition to all such, who seem to walk in the wayes to Heaven*, who are often in hearing, in praying, often in the religious duties God requireth: above all things look to the singlenesse of thy heart in these things, thou wilt else have no glory from God, nor true comfort in thy own conscience. As *Solomon* said, *Whatsoever thou doest, do with all thy might*; so whatsoever thou doest, do it in plainnesse of heart, looking up to God onely; and remember, though men see not thy carnal motives, nor the crooked windings



of thy heart, yet the all-seeing eye of God, beholds the very atomes (as it were) within thee: How great will thy confusion be, if at the day of judgement God shall reject all thy glittering holiness, saying, you did it not to me; in all these duties you served not me? Even as God complaineth of those hypocritical Jews, Zech. 7. 5. *When ye fasted and mourned in these moneths, did ye it to me, even to me?* This want of singleness of heart, respecting God only, was that which made all their Religion abominable unto God.



## SERM. XCI.

### Of the true Nature of Godly Sincerity.

2 COR. 1. 12.

*And godly sincerity.*

**T**HIS is the second word, wherein is positively expressed, the manner of Paul's conversation in the world. Although both the words tend to the same purpose, yet *simplicity* doth more respect the frame and inward constitution of the heart: and *sincerity* doth more denote the purity and integrity of our aims and ends in holy things.

In the expression we may take notice,

1. Of the grace it self, viz. *Sincerity*.

2. The limitation, or qualification of it, *Godly sincerity*.

The grace, or rather the gracious modification of Paul's life, is said to be in *ἀκεραιότητι*, in sincerity. The word as Lexicographers observe, cometh of *αἶσα*, the Sunne-beams, and *κρίνω*, to judge. Now in them there are two things:

The *αἶσα*, lustre and light, and so it is the same with *ἁπλότης*, that which is clear, transparent and manifest. Thus 2 Pet. 3. 1. it is called, your sincere mind.

2. In the Sunne-beams there is *σχηματισμός*, heat, whereby heterogeneous are separated, and homogeneous congregated; and then it is the same with *ἀμύγμη*, unmixt, as the word sincere is pure honey, *sine cera*, without wax. So that in this expression is denoted the purity of the heart in all its aims and intentions, not mingling other things of a contrary nature with holy actions; and then such an open, clear and diaphanous frame of soul, that it hideth not, or covereth any thing, but delighteth to have all things open and naked to the eyes of God.

Hence in the next place, you have the limitation or amplification, *In the sincerity of God*; *ὅτι*, we render it *godly sincerity*: Now this may be thus understood:

1. By way of opposition, to that *Natural*, or *Moral Truth*, and *Ingenuity*, which may be in men destitute of grace. The *Romana fides* was proverbial, because of the truth and sincerity that was in all their dealings; but because they did not know God, or look up to him, referring their actions to lower and more inferior ends; therefore it was not *godly sincerity*. Thus many civil



civil men have an honest, upright heart to doe truly and righteously in all things relating to men, but they want the soul of all, which is to referre this to the glory of God, and to eye him principally in their actions.

2. It may be called, *The sincerity of God, effectivè*, because it is that which is wrought in us by God. The heart naturally is full of guile and hypocrisie, never performing holy things upon holy motives. So that it is the grace of God, which putteth truth in the inward parts, and maketh us Sheep of Foxes, Doves of Kites.

3. It is the *sincerity of God*, by way of direction and command, because he hath commanded, that with a pure and upright heart, we are to serve him in all our wayes. And this our Translators seem to aim at, rendring it *godly sincerity*, that is, such which is according to the rules of Gods word. And this excludeth that *sincerity of conscience*, which many heretical and deluded persons may have in their zealous prosecution of their false wayes. Paul had a good conscience, and a sincere heart, while a *Pharisee*, that he did not go against the dictates of his conscience; yea he thought himself bound to doe what he did: But this is not enough to godly sincerity, this is humane sincerity, thou hast a clear perswasion in thy own heart of the goodnesse of thy wayes; but if it be godly, it must be according to the rule of godlinesse, and that is the Scripture. A mans own conscience or heart is not the iupream rule of sincerity, but the Scripture. And this is very necessary to be observed, because we are apt to rest in our hearts, the sincerity we feel there, the comfort and quietnesse we have from thence, as if they were the utmost rule we were to resolve all into; whereas it must not be, what say our hearts, but what say the Scriptures informing and regulating our hearts?

4. It may be called *sincerity of God, finaliter*, because whatsoever a man doth, that is thus sincere, he doth it to the glory of God; that is his mark, if he falleth short of that, if he findeth his own glory, his own applause, his owne advantages interposing, this doth exceedingly grieve and trouble him; he accounts that as drosse, and not gold, he saith, This duty I have lost.

Lastly, It is called *sincerity of God, objectivè*, because he that is sincere, doth all things as in the prelence of God, knowing that God beholdeth him, that he trieth the reins, and searcheth the hearts of all men. And this is principally meant in this place (though the other be not excluded.) And so we have Paul explaining himself in the next Chapter, *vers. 17. As of sincerity, as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ.*

These things explained, Observe,

Godly sincerity carrieth a man above all other things to God himself

*That godly sincerity carrieth a man above all self-respects in religious wayes, even to God himself.*

It is not man, either glory, or praise from him, but God alone that his heart is fixed upon. As those that did runne in a race (such is our Christianity) did not matter the acclamations of spectators, but the judgement of him who was the Moderator, to judge on whose side the victory was. Thus Paul, 1 Cor. 4. *It is a very small thing with me, that I should be judged of you, or of mans judgement, but he that judgeth me is the Lord.* It is a miserable bondage to please men, and to be like a looking-glasse to every one, seeming to be what he is, that he talketh with: such a man is inconstant, hypocritical, changeth the wayes of Religion often, according as humane advantages do intervene; whereas the sincere man, like Christ himself, is the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Like those fishes, Nazianzen in his contemplations, by the Sea side,



sider, observed that keeping close to the rock were not moved, but the rest were cast out, and are fetched in again according to the ebbing and flowing of the waters: but he that walketh with sincerity, as God is the same, the Scriptures the same, godlinesse is alwayes the same, so also is he the same. As the Pilot hath his eye alwayes to the Starre in the Heavens, not regarding the tempests, or tossings of his ship. Thus it is with the sincere man.

To work this upon our hearts, let us consider,

First, *What are those things in God, that the sincere man doth thus fix himself upon, living as if there were none in the world, but he and God alone.* And

What it is in God that a sincere heart looks upon.

First, *The Omniscience of God*, that all-seeing eye of his, whereby he knoweth every secret turning, and winding of the soul, yea our thoughts as farre off, while they are but in the minting and womb, and thereby seeth that in us, which we cannot our selves. This is that, which is often in the thoughts of a sincere man. This all searching knowledge of God, David largely celebrateth, *Psal. 139. 1, 2, 3, &c.* Thus God commandeth Abraham, *To walk before him, and be perfect*, Gen. 17. The consideration of Gods presence, that he is with us, that he knoweth every thought, and every word, this will make us perfect and upright. Had *Gehezi* thought that *Elijahs* spirit would have gone along with him, as it were, and taken notice of the actions he did, he would not with such confidence have come into the Prophets presence, as it all had been well. Oh then, how vain is it to hide thy designs and intentions to men, to make protestations and professions of thy integrity to men, if the all-seeing eye of God behold other things in thee? What greater obligation can there be, to have all the motions and turnings of thy heart cordial and faithfull towards God, seeing no man can more perfectly behold the outward gestures of thy body, then he doth the inward motions of thy soul? Oh say, God knoweth what I think, what my heart is upon, what is the spring of every duty I do!

1. His Omniscience.

Secondly, *Sincerity respecteth God*, *As he is the first cause, and the last end.* The *Alpha* and *Omega*, the beginning and the end, of whom are all things, and to whom are all things, Rom. 11. 36. Now this two-fold property in God, the sincere man doth greatly improve. First, *As he is the Efficient cause*, so that he expects all-sufficiency and power from the grace of God alone. The Scripture doth frequently affirm, That it is by the grace of God alone, that we are able to do any good thing; therefore the sincere man dareth not sacrifice to his own nets, dare not give any thing to his own power and free-will, neither dare he rob Christ of his glory, by setting up Angels and Saints, as Mediators, under any nice distinctions whatsoever; he trembleth to dispute against the grace of God, lest he want the blessed effects of it in the greatest necessities. You may observe *David* and *Paul*, who expresse such remarkable sincerity towards God, that they go out of themselves, depend on God alone: and not onely do they acknowledge God the supream giver of all the good they enjoy, but also they make him the ultimate end, to whom they referre all things; remembring the Apostles rule, *1 Cor. 10. 31. Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* This is a very hard lesson to do, a very difficult duty to be performed; but yet the sincere man, he overlooketh all second causes and instruments with his Eagles-eye; he gets up (as it were) into the mountain, and leaveth all his carnal interests below, as *Abraham* did his beasts and servants, when he went to sacrifice *Isaac*. This single and pure intention of Gods glory, is not so easily accomplished, as it is quickly and commonly pretended. Oh how rare a thing is it to eat and drink, to study and preach, that hereby God may be glorified? How closely doth some carnal respect, or vain-glorious motive follow thee in the duty, as *Asahel* did *Joab*, which thou canst not make depart from thee, till thou thrust it (as it were)

2. His being the first cause and the last end.

thorow



thorow the fift rib, till thou give it its mortal blow by mortification.

3. His sovereignty and dominion.

Thirdly, The sincere heart relateth all to God, *In regard of his Sovereignty and dominion over him.* Because God is the supream Lord and Lawgiver, who only can impose Laws upon the conscience; therefore in his obedience he doth principally look to the will and authority of the Lawgiver. This is a notable character of sincerity, to obey, because thus saith the Lord; it is his will, and as the supream orb doth carry along with it the inferiour orbs, though against their particular inclination: Thus doth the will of God, because supream, bring the creatures will into obedience, when corrupt inclinations do propound a contrary way. It is the matter of our prayer which we are constantly to pour forth unto God, *That his will may be done, his will, not our will.* Therefore if sincerity have a throne in thy heart, thy sense will be as soft wax to receive any stamp or impression from God; what God commands, though against pleasures, profits, and all the inclinations of thy corrupt heart, thou doest readily submit unto. Thus thou offerest up thy self as an whole burnt-offering unto God.

4. The wisdom of God.

Lastly, This sincerity doth respect the *wisdome of God, in all those sharp, and bitter providential temptations that a man may be exercised with, for his faithfull service to God.* The Scripture doth frequently inform of this, what cups of wormwood they must drink that will be Christs Disciples, what crowns of thorns they must endure upon their heads, who expect crowns of glory from him. Now the heart that is sincere, doth not cavil and murmur at Gods dispensations herein, though so displeasing to flesh and blood, but doth wholly acquiesce in the wisdom of God, silencing the impetuous motions of his Spirit; God is wiser than I, he knoweth this is better for me, then I think it is. For certainly all discontents do arise from this, we think God might have shewed more love to us, and more wisdom, if he did not suffer such and such things to come upon us: Therefore afflictions and persecutions are the special Touchstone to discover our sincerity. This fire will manifest whether we be gold or drosse, these winnowings whether chaff or wheat. The hypocrite wanting root, doth commonly begin to wither, when the Sunnes scorching heat doth arise; and if they are at any times afflicted for Christ, it is against their wils, so that with *Simon*, they are compelled to carry the crosse of Christ; but sincerity doth not only admire the wisdom of God in such dispensations, but justifieth him, and condemneth its self. Thus you see, what are those high and sublime things a sincere man looketh at in all his religious wayes: That whereas in a bodily way, the beast looketh to the ground, when man hath an upright look towards Heaven: So even every natural man hath a soul bowed down only to earthly respects, while the sincere heart ascends up to God himself. Therefore it is that he doth prudently escape all those ambushments that low inferiour ends, are apt to lay in his way, thereby to intercept him from arriving at God himself. We cannot reckon all the inferiour and unworthy ends that are apt to interpose, no more than the creeping things in the Sea; onely some few we may instance in. As

What are those inferiour ends which interpose betwixt God our souls, which we are apt to look upon.

1. Vain-glory.

1. *Vain-glory and Self-applause*, that many times clippeth the wings of our souls, that while we are moving to Heaven, this maketh us fall to the ground. This made the *Pharisees* lose the heavenly reward of all their religious duties. And how often have the holiest of men complained of this *Dalilah*, this sweet poison, this flattering enemy; Is it not the worme that devoureth the sweetest flowers, and the ripest fruit? This maketh death in the pot, even damnation in excellent duties; therefore the sincere man doth constantly watch and ward, keeping a strict search into his heart, that no such thief enter in and steal away his treasure.

A second inferiour and base end, which would corrupt us in the service of God,



God, is *The external greatnesse of honour, or the seeming profit of wealth.* 2. Honour and riches.  
 This dust hath often blown into the eyes, that they have not been able to look up. What glorious things did *John* do for God? If you look upon the external actions only? But his heart was not sincere in this, it was a temporal Kingdome that he aimed at, and the earthly advancing of himself. And the third kind of hearers, they did not apostatize, but the love of the world, and the deceiveablenesse of riches; these things like weeds did grow up with the good corne. It was *Simon Magnus* his hainous transgression, to desire the Holy Ghost for money. And hath not this been as wickedly practised sometimes to make use of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, or at least the pretence of them for earthly gaine? To be religious for gaine, to make a profession for earthly advantages, what is this but to make use of God and his wayes for money? And if you say, These are base and unworthy ends indeed, this is to be a *Judas*, to sell Christ for money, an *Esan*, to sell our birthright for pottage. Therefore you must know, that if we could as the *Peripateticks* enjoyne, do virtuous actions for virtues sake; yet this were too low an end for a sincere Christian; when men do righteous actions for the publick good; when men performe religious duties meerly to please and content their consciences. These that are good, as proxime and secondary ends, being made the ultimate, do deprive the duties of their true, proper sincere Christianity. This is to take *John Baptist* for Christ; or as some did, to take Christ onely for some great Prophet. This is to judge sincerity and godlinesse a lesse thing than it is; to take a counterfeit, for a precious pearl. And therefore the motive of duties in Popery, is wonderfully short of true spiritual ones; even as their faith of true divine motives, as they resolve their faith into the Authority of their Church, so their religious duties into their own power and merit. Whereas to be holy, so as to rest in our holinesse, and to make that our utmost end, is to unthrone Christ, and to put our graces in the room of Gods grace. So that we are not onely by sincerity to overlook all earthly objects, but even all duties and inherent graces, joyning with Christ onely as the beloved of our souls. This sincerity is that which maketh the way to Heaven so narrow. This is the reason why many are called, but few chosen. If the external performance of duties were enough, many thousands would go to Heaven, more than do: but sincerity is that which makes every holy duty so difficult.





## S E R M, XCII.

*A further Discovery of the Nature and Effects of Godly Sincerity.*

2 C O R. I. 12.

*In godly sincerity.*

Propositions  
concerning  
godly sincerity.

I. 'Tis universal.

**G**odly Sincerity (you heard) did raise up the heart of a man above all low and inferiour ends, fixing it upon God only.

Now because I have spoken much of this upon other occasions, I shall briefly dispatch this subject at this time, laying down several Propositions, which will partly be descriptive of the nature of this sincerity, and partly manifestative of what are the effects of it. And

First, *This sincerity doth comprehend an Universality in it.* Hypocrisie dealeth in pieces and parcels, it doth many things, and it omitteth many things; whereas sincerity comprehendeth all the essential parts of Religion, it is not defective in necessities; though it hath not perfection of degrees, yet it hath of parts: Therefore sincerity is the same with *ὑλική*, completeness of all parts and limbs, when a man hath every part of the body, that is his *ἁλός*, lot, or condition, or portion to have, 1 Thess. 5.23. Hence Jam. 1.4. it is called *entire*, that ye may be entire, wanting nothing. It was the fault that Christ found with the Church of Sardis, Revel. 3.2. That he had not found her works perfect before God, *πληρωμένη*, filled up. There were many empty hollow places and vacuities, as it were, wanting this grace, and that duty which would have made her compleat. Now there are several kinds of *Universalities*, wherein this sincerity doth discover it self. There is an universality of the *Object matter*, about which it is exercised: It maketh a man carefull to performe the greatest duties, and the lesse duties: It accounteth nothing little, wherein the command of God is concerned, that is a great God: It abstaineth from great sinnes and little sinnes: It accounteth no sinne little, which cannot be purged away, but by the blood of Christ. Again, it doth faithfully respect all the *Commandments of God*, such as are terminated upon God himself, or such as relate to man. Paul expressed this sincerity, when he called it, *A conscience void of offence both towards God and man*, Act. 24. 16. He knoweth true Religion cannot be without righteousness; nor godly righteousness without the duties of Religion. Furthermoe, there are duties of suffering for Christ, as well as of doing for him: Sometimes it is farre more displeasing to flesh and blood to suffer for Christ, then to be doing for him. But the sincere heart is prepared for both, he doth not capitulate with Christ about what he shall be put upon: Therefore it is that he is willing to take up the crosse, and to follow Christ; he accepteth of those duties, where self-denial, and self-mortification are requisite, as those which may be more gratefull and acceptable unto



unto a man. Oh how much easier is it to preach these things, and to hear these things, then to practise them! As there is an universality of the *Object*, so also of the *Subject* where this is; every part of the soul is sanctified. There is not illumination without sanctification; gifts without grace: but the whole man is rightly constituted. Hence we told you, sincerity is not properly a grace, but it's the modification of grace, every grace is to be sincere, 1 Tim. 1. 5. There is a *pure heart*, a *good conscience*, and *faith unfeigned*. So that sincerity is a property, and an affection of every grace; it's not repentance, unlesse sincere; it's not faith, except sincere. Again, There is an *Universality of time and place*. A sincere man is godly in times of prosperity, as well as of adversity; in times of health, as well as of sickness; on the week day, as well as the Sabbath. And so for places, *Paul* saith in the Text, it was *in the world*, as well as at *Corinth*. At some times, in some places, and with some company to pretend onely for God, this discovereth hypocrisie in the bottome.

Secondly, Sincerity is herein remarkable, *That it goeth to the bottome and root of sinne*. It doth not onely take away the external acts, and so make a smooth skinne, but it giveth good vitals and inwards: especially it setteth against that rotten core, that is in every man, (*viz.*) a deceitfull and false heart towards God and man. It is knowne, what the *Psalmist* concludeth of every man, *Psal.* 116. 11. which the Apostle maketh use of, *Rom.* 3. 4. *Every man is a liar*; that is of himselfe, and in his owne nature; otherwise *David* and *Paul*, were not liars in delivering of this truth, neither are regenerate men liars, so farre as the Spirit of God doth sanctifie them. But naturally the hearts of all men are deceitfull, full of lies and falsehoods towards God, as if they loved him, as if they repented, when yet self is the motive that setteth all on work: and no lesse false is it to man also. It is true indeed, commonly it is interpreted by good Expositors, as if this speech did come from *David* in unbelief, that it was the weaknesse of his faith, thinking as if *Samuel*, and other Prophets had deceived him about the Kingdome. But in this sense, there would have been a falsehood in the speech; neither would the Apostle then have made that use of it, as he doth. Besides, at the verse before, he saith, *I believed, therefore have I spoken*, which the Apostle also maketh use of, *2 Cor.* 4. 13. for freedom and boldnesse in the profession of our faith; therefore it may very well be, that *David* from the strength of his faith now in his persecutions (for that haste he speaketh of, is to be understood of his flight, and running from place to place) doth encourage himselfe from the truth of God, and is not dismayed to see *Absalom*, and all his people prove false and perfidious: for the corrupt nature of man inclineth him to no better. If then the heart of a man be so naturally prone to be false towards God and man, to be mercenary to seek our selves, to be hypocrites. This is the excellency of sincerity, that it eateth away the rotten flesh at the bottome. Hence

2. Sincerity goeth to the bottom of sin.

In the third place, *It is because of this sincerity, that the way to Heaven is such a streight, and narrow way*: That Godlinesse is so rare a Jewel, *That many are called, but few are chosen*; because though there be many duties, many religious professions, yet little sincerity of spirit. Oh, if there were no more required to goe to Heaven, than to hear, pray, keep up an external forme of Religion, different from the course of the world, How easie and broad would the way to Heaven be? Many thousands more would goe to Heaven than doe: But this is that which makes it so difficult

3. Hence it is that it is so hard to be a Christian.



a thing to be saved; because no duty, no religious performances are entertained, but rejected by God, which come not from a sincere and true principle of grace within: It is not then praying, but sincere praying: It is not hearing, but sincere hearing: Yea Martyrdome without sincerity, is but the Devils Sacrifice: So that experience will teach thee to set upon religious duties, from principles of sincerity, is a farre more difficult task, then thou ever thoughtst of; while going on in a formal, customary way, Heaven could never be so difficultly obtained; neither could those Texts of Scripture, which speak of the holy violence and agonies that must be in the way to Heaven, were the externals of Religion enough; but it is sincerity in these actings that maketh the streights. When we set upon that, then we see how far nature, education, custom, and formality may carry us, and yet want the soul and life of all.

4. Sincerity is the proper difference betwixt a temporary professor, and a true believer.

Therefore, Fourthly, *Sincerity is the proper characteristical difference, between a temporary in Christianity, and a true convert.* It is one of the greatest practical Questions in Divinity that is, What is that, which differences between the common graces of Gods Spirit, and the special? Or, What are the bounds and limits, whereby we may know to distinguish between an enlightned hypocrite, fervent in all external, religious duties, and he who is cordially, and truly so? The Question is, Whether it be a specifical or gradual difference? And what is that, which the truly godly doth? And the foolish Virgin, or foolish builder cannot do? And if we descend not to particulars, but speak in the general, then we must say, Sincerity is the essentiall difference. So that as rationality maketh the essential difference between a man, and a beast: so doth sincerity between the truly godly, and the seeming so onely. This made the difference between *Saul* and *David*, between *Peter* and *Judas*, between many Kings recorded in the Old Testament, who did very much in the wayes of the Lord; and those who did seek God with all their heart. So that by this you see, how much it lieth us upon to look after sincerity in duties, more than duties; after sincerity in gifts and religious abilities, more than gifts: for this maketh the Christian. The other are but as the body and garments, this is the soul. All thy glorious building must be pulled down, if this be not the foundation. It is no matter what standing thy Discipleship to Christ is of, nor how famous thy gifts and parts are, nor what an interest thou hast in the thoughts of Professours, nor what a stricter way of Church-order, thou mayest seeme to set upon, if sincerity be not the salt to season all. Oh then that Christians would study more in this point, meditate about it, read about it, knowing that this is all in all! If this be not the first stone laid in thy spiritual building; when stormes arise, thy building will fall, and thy fall will be the greater, by how much the appearances of holinesse have been the greater. Therefore it is that sincerity is usually called by Divines the *Gospel-perfection*, when many are said, *To seeke God with a perfect heart*; the meaning is not, as if there were no sinnes or imperfections cleaving to them; but because they were upright and sincere: Though weak faith, yet if sincere faith: Though imperfect love, yet if sincere love; this hath a kinde of Gospel-perfection. Hence of all the deceits in the world, none is more dangerous and pernicious, then when we take our selves for upright and sincere, but are not.

5. Sincerity carries us through duties with delight.

Fifthly, *Sincerity doth carry a man on in religious wayes from principles of voluntarinesse and delight within.* Outward motives may make false hearts towards God set upon many notable services; as we see in *Iehu* and



and Judas, &c. But here was no voluntary and delightful principle within. For a man will never sincerely leave the sweetnesse of his lusts and profits he had in a carnal way, till he finde infinitely more sweetnesse, and delight in heavenly things. So that this doth necessarily accompany sincerity, that it maketh a man voluntary and willing, with joy and delight in the whole work of God; *Psalm 110. 3. Thy people shall be willing (willingnesses) in the day of thy power.* It is true, even the most upright doe sometimes finde much deadnesse and unwillingnesse to holy things; there is a wearisomnesse and avernesse they sometimes feelee; but this is an heavy burden to them: They cry out to God, to quicken them, to draw them, to enliven them; whereas the insincere man is carried out by external motives: Even as when the water maketh the Mill runne round, that of it self would never move, because it wanteth life within. Therefore that expression of *Job* is observeable, *Job 27. 10. Will he delight himselfe in the Almighty? Will he alwayes call upon God?* The insincere man cannot delight in God, and therefore his duties are not constant and perpetual: whereas this sincerity doth fill the heart with internal principles of joy, readinesse and delight in the wayes of God. Hence it is that the favour of God, and the light of his countenance enjoyed by faith, doe take him off from all the delight he formerly had in other things. As *Austin* who was carried out with a vehement and most flagrant desire after knowledge and learning, which made him try all the severall Sects of the Philosophers, as also to fall into the *Manichee* heresie: When it pleased God to make a powerfull, sincere and effectual change upon his soul, then he said of all the sciences, formerly so dear to him; *Nunc pro illius amore vix veniunt in mentem.* The love of God made him scarce ever thinke of them. This makes grace natural (as it were) because the principle is within.

Sixthly, Sincerity making a man thus to worke from a principle of readinesse and delight within, Therefore it is that he findes grace to be a real lively thing within him. Insincerity maketh a man have onely confused and general apprehensions about grace: whereas uprightness giveth a man a reall taste and experimental feeling of the same within him. A man without this reall power of grace, under the most glorious profession, is but as a pictured man, or a painted fire. Who were more diligent in the externall study of the Law, than the *Jewes*? How greatly did they glory in the knowledge thereof, as if they had come out of the Fathers bosome? Yet observe what our Saviour saith, (*John 5. 37.*) to them, *Ye have neither heard his voice, or seene his shape at any time:* That is, either they had not powerfull, experimentall discoveries of God upon their soules: or though they had heard Gods voice many times in their Ancestours, and had seene many apparitions of God by Angels, yet because Christs word did not abide in them, it's accounted, as if they never had any knowledge at all. Hence grace is often compared to life. Now as a man that is alive, feeleth and knoweth himselfe to be so: Thus, where this spiritual worke of grace is sincerely putting it selfe forth, there the soul hath much reality in the sense of it. It maketh a man discourse and conferre about that, of which he hath experience; as *Paul*, *Galat. 2. 26. I no longer live, but Christ in me.* Many speake of grace, as some doe of strange Countreyes, wherein they never travelled. What they have by Books and Mapps that they discover. Thus it is with many, they know nothing of Regeneration, of the New-creature, but what they have by Bookes, or by hearing of Sermons, and therefore have not such a reall, evident

6. Sincerity makes a man find grace to be a reall thing.



evident and clear apprehension of Gods grace, as they should have. Now it's sincerity that maketh all things to be real, and in power, not in name and words onely. And from this reall lively working of grace sincerely in us, we come to have much assurance and comfort in our hearts, as *Paxl* here in the Text, his rejoycing was from the testimony of his conscience concerning his sincerity. Therefore the hypocrite he never attaineth to any solid joy, or any powerfull assurance about the favour of God towards him. This experience of the love of God sincerely and really working in the heart of *Peter*, as fire in the bosome, made him againe and againe say to Christ, *That he loved him*. And thus *Austin* in those reall and affectionate workings of Gods grace upon him, made him to bold as to say, (*Lib. 10. Confess. cap. 6.*) So *Iansenius* conjoyne h the words, *Non dubiâ, sed certâ conscientia Domine, amo te, percussisti cor meum verbo tuo, & amavi.* O Lord, I am sure in my conscience that I love thee; Thou hast smitten me, and wounded my heart with thy Word, and therefore I love thee. So that let a man goe on in a formall, customary, empty way of Religion: Let him pray, heare and professe Godlinesse, but all this while without sincerity, and the power of it; and afterwards God breake his heart, new mould him, make him a new creature, he will then finde such a wonderfull change, and see grace to be such another powerfull thing in his soule over once he thought; that he will even stand amazed to see, what he is. Oh little did I know, did I feele what now I doe! When some few droppe of this precious ointment shall fall into his soule, then the sweetnesse will be incredible, not onely to others, but also to himselfe, which he findes within him. Thus sincerity doth cause reall, lively, and assured comfortable motions of the soule in heavenly things. Not that the sincere are alwayes on this Mount of transfiguration: No, they are in a wilderness sometimes, as well as in a *Canaan*; but onely this is the nature of sincerity so to doe. Thus it is in the *Idea*, though in the subject there are many times divers imperfections and weaknesses. To be sure no spirituall thing, whether it be of grace or comfort in a Christian heart, can be carried on without much combate and conflict.





# SERM. XCIII.

## Of Fleshly Wisdome, with some Principles of it.

2 COR. 1.12.

*Not with fleshly wisdome.*

**T**He next particular considerable, is the manner of *Paul's* conversation in this world, expressed negatively, *Not with fleshly wisdome*. This is made contrary to that *simplicity* and *sincerity* he had mentioned before. Only the expression doth imply a two-fold wisdome, the one heavenly, and from above; This the Apostle doth not deny, but at other times doth assume to himself. There is a civil prudence necessary in all Church-Officers to feed and govern their flock. There is also a *spiritual wisdome*, whereby we are able to understand, and to discover the mysteries of God. These are an excellent gift of God. And therefore, 1 Cor. 1. 2, 3, 4. when the Apostle had renounced all excellency of speech, and *mans wisdome*, as he calleth it, yet vers. 6. he correcteth his expression, saying, *Howbeit we speak wisdome, yet not the wisdome of this world*. So then, *Mans wisdome*, the *wisdome of the world*, is the same which is here called *fleshly wisdome*. So that (I say) the expression doth imply a division of wisdome into heavenly or divine; The wisdome from above; and that which is carnal or fleshly, the Apostle calleth it *sensual and devilish*, Jam. 3. 15, 17.

Now this *wisdome* in the Text may be called *fleshly*,

1. *Because of the root and original of it*, which is the sinfull corruption in man. For flesh is many times taken for *sinfulness*, as well as for *weaknesse*.

2. It may be called *fleshly*, *Because it forsaketh the rules given in Gods word*, that is the proper fountain of wisdome, which alone is able to *make us wise to salvation*, 2 Tim. 3. 15. and walketh according to the precepts of humane and sinfull policy.

3. It may be called *fleshly*, *Because the end and effects of it, are onely to advance man, and carnal interest*; not that all glory and honour may be given to Christ alone.

So that by this *fleshly wisdome*, we are to understand all crafty, false and deceitfull wayes; yea and all that pride and swelling in humane learning and oratory, which the false Apostles gloried in. From whence observe,

*That the Ministers of the Gospel are to carry on their work without any fleshly wisdome, or sinfull policy.*

Gods truth doth not need mans lie. The Gospel doth not want for its propagation, the craft and fraud of ungodly policy. Howsoever Politicians take up many

Why carnal wisdom called fleshly.

Ministers ought not to use fleshly wisdom.



many rules about worldly greatness; as, *Qui nescit dissimulare, nescit regnare*, &c. And with *Plato*, to say, *That a lie is as necessary in a Commonwealth, as physick to a diseased body*. Yet as Christ himself, so all the Ministers of Christ are to be without guile in their mouth. The Gospel of Christ is preserved and propagated onely by such heavenly and holy meanes, that God will own, and give a blessing unto. Christ compareth his Disciples to *Sheep*, not to *Foxes*. It is true, there is a *Serpentine wisdom* commended by Christ. And our Saviour commissionating his Disciples to preach the Gospel, biddeth them, *To beware of men*, Mat. 10. 17. but an offensive, or a deceitfull way of walking, that is not becoming the Ministers of Christ. And therefore *Paul* doth frequently disclaime it, especially, *1 Thess.* 2. 3, 4, 5. There are two false wayes of propagating Religion, as *Gerhard* observeth, (*Cathol. confess. parte prim.*) *Media violentia*, and *Media fraudulentia*. The means of *violence* may be either in external, temporal punishments; or in tyrannical unreasonable Church impositions, which later the Apostle doth also renounce, *vers.* 24. Both which wayes the Antichristian party are notorious in. And there are *Media fraudulentia*, wayes of *hypocrisie* and *deceit*, using subtil and unjustifiable wayes to bring about their religious designs. Now although it be the Gospel that we would extoll; though the holy truths, and pure worship of Christ, yet we must not make use of *fleshly wisdom* herein, but walk by Scripture-rules. For it's Gods grace, not mans policy, gives successe to the Gospel.

Why this truth  
is to be treat-  
ed of.

1. Because pro-  
fessors are  
charged with  
it.

Of this latter we are to treat. And we are the more to consider this point, for three Reasons:

First, *Because it is the nature of all enemies to the truth and holinesse of Christ, to charge the godly and innocent defenders thereof with hypocrisie and policy, that they do onely seek themselves, that they drive on politick designs under religious pretences*. That whereas it is the property of heretical persons to broach new opinions, *Alicujus temporalis commodi causâ*, as *Austin* putteth in the definition of an Heretick, these judging of others by themselves, do think that even the faithfull servants of God, do only seek their own earthly greatnesse and advancement. Hence we see even our Saviour himself so diligent to remove this charge from him, *I seek not my own glory, but the glory of him, who sent me*, John 8. 50. So *John* 7. 18. where our Saviour giveth the character of a false teacher, of one that speaketh of himself, that he seeketh his own glory: Thus the Popish party charge lies and calumnies upon the Protestants, as if they had used all politick and crafty wayes to disseminate their Doctrines. Therefore *Lessius* the Jesuite, among his reasons, why the Protestant Religion is not to be imbraced, maketh this one, *That Religion* (saith he) *which useth lies and falsehoods to propagate it self, cannot be of God; which he applieth to the Protestant Churches*. But as for the *Major*, we grant it, as a sure truth: True Religion is only advanced by truth and sincerity; whereas errors being in themselves lies, are increasing by the father of lies. But then we say, the Church of *Rome* is notoriously guilty in this way; from them first came that expression of *Pia fraudes*, applied by some to indulgences. It is the Church of *Rome* that hath (*Revel.* 17. 5.) upon her forehead written *Mystery*; she is the harlot, that like *Solomons*, doth wipe her mouth, and speak of vows, pretending Religion, when she hath been acting her leudnesse. But by how much the more the enemies of Gods Church, are apt to charge the guides therein with policy and deceitfulnesse, the more are they to watch to their wayes, and to walk with all sincerity. For these accusations are believed by many. And withall there is a generation of Atheistical, politick men in the world, that hereby are hardened in their impiety, as if Religion were but a politick devise of men, and therefore matter not any further than their advan-



rages are served thereby, *Whose damnation sleepeth not*, if they do not awaken themselves.

Secondly, The second Reason why this is to be attended, is, *Because all pretenders to any Religion in the world, they would all be thought to be sincere.* None will own and justify hypocrisie and guile to be lawfull. Indeed the Jesuites they go high this way, when they defend *mental reservations*, and make equivocation, *Prudens defensio rei*, as *Valentia*. These are not onely deceitfull, and use *fleshly wisdom*, but also plead for it, yet at other times would be thought very free from all such carnal policy, and way of lying. As *Bellarmino* in a Sermon of his, (*Conc. 9. de probitate doct. Eccles.*) inveigheth against Protestants, whom he calleth *Hereticks*, *Although* (saith he) *their Doctrine were true*, yet ought they to confirme it with lies? *Nonne satius esset millicies obmutescere, quam semel mentiri?* Were it not better suffer to be a thousand times silent, then once to lie? What is the worke of the Devil, if this be not? Thus a great Champion of the *Romish Church*, which you would think did all things in great candour and ingenuity: And yet in that very Sermon reporteth forged lies against eminent men, continuing the same bitterness in *Conc. 10, 11, 12.* as if his tongue were set on fire from hell. But there are two famous places in the Scripture, which may abundantly confirm us of the deceivable and false wayes in the *Romane Church*. The first is, *1 Tim. 4. 2.* where they are said, *To speake lies in hypocrisie, forbidding to marry, &c.* who are therefore said, *To have seducing spirits, yea and a conscience seared with an hot iron*; that is, because they can so abominably dissemble both with God and man. The second place is, *2 Thes. 2. 9.* where the coming of that wicked one is said to be *after the working of Satan, with all power, and signes, and lying wonders, in all deceivablenesse of unrighteousnesse.* Here you see, that fraud and impostures are (as it were) the true note of their false Church. But though this be so, yet they would wash their Blackmoor skin, and charge that crime upon those Churches, who departed from them. Seeing then that this coufening, deceiving way is charged mutually by all parties upon one another, with what integrity and fidelity doth it behove those to walk, who are indeed the faithfull Ministers of Christ? But

2. Because all professors would be thought clear from it.

Thirdly, *The preaching of this truth is to take off those prejudices that doe too closely adhere even to such, who are come out of that spiritual Babylon.* There is a causelesse and sinfull suspition in people, that if the faithfull Pastours in Gods Church do indeavour a Reformation from the accustomed superstitions, or evil and prophane disorders, that through length of time have taken full and quiet possession; they presently attribute this to carnal and corrupt ends; they will not believe that these things are undertaken from pure and holy ends; they will not be perswaded, that the motive to these things, is pure respect to Gods glory: but that the Ministers of God have their carnal and sinister respects in all this, either to get dominion, or to advance themselves in one way or other. Now although it may not be denied, but that in perusing of Ecclesiastical History; we may observe that carnal interest, and humane respects were eminently dominative in Church-affairs, yet God forbid that any should be given up to such a temptation, as to think that there is no truth or fidelity in any. When *Lot* did but courteously and civilly reprove the *Sodomites* for their high impieties; see how wickedly they interpret this, *Genes. 19. 9.* *He will needs be a judge over us.* They construed his endeavour against sinne to be nothing but usurpation. Thus also *Corah* and his complices accounted all that *Moses* and *Aaron* did, tyranny and pride, *Numb. 16. 5.* *Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the Congregation is holy, &c.* Wherefore doe ye lift up your

3. To take off prejudices from true believers.



*selves above the Congregation of the Lord.* And we may see by many Apologies that *Paul* maketh, the *Galatians* and other Churches could hardly be perswaded of his sincerity and love to them. If then thou shalt once satisfie thy self with this, that those Ministers of God, who endeavour to bring a people out of their disorders, and to make them conformable to Scripture-directions, dare not look to themselves herein: yea they goe against themselves, and shew no fleshly wisdom at all; but rather if they consulted with that, they would let people goe quietly in the broad way to perdition, as they have done. If (I say) this be once believed by thee, it will make thee with all alacrity and chearfulness to go along with them, and encourage them in their work. But it is the Devil that moveth upon that unruly sea of thy heart; he putteth thee into many vexations and commotions, whereas if the Spirit of God should rebuke both Satan and thy own corruptions, thou wouldest with calmnesse reflect upon thy self, yea reprove thy selfe, saying, Why should I be offended at those wayes which are for the good of my soule, which make to the getting of knowledge, and to the overcoming of those former lusts I have been intangled with, which would have done mee no good, but have destroyed my soul?

Principles of  
fleshly wisdom.

1. To defend  
errors from  
Scripture  
wrested.

These things premised, let us instance in some principles of *fleshly wisdom*, that men have used, and doe use in the matters of Religion. And

First, This is the *Proprium quarto modo*, as it were of all heretical persons, *To cover their falsehoods with pretended Authority from the Scripture.* Now this is meerly fleshly wisdom to regard the Scripture no further then by the words and phrases thereof thou canst protect thy errors. Not to go to the word of God, as that Rule by which thou wilt stand, or fall, to give up thy heart and soul, and all thy thoughts to be moulded and framed by that; but having afore-hand swallowed down thy corrupt tenets, then to go to Scripture, to wrest and compell it (as it were) to speak for thee. There is a great deal of *fleshly wisdom* in managing of false wayes, but it is never more hainous, yea and sacrilegious, then when it doth thus prophanely and irreverently handle Scripture. If we expostulate with the *Socinian*, he will grant the Scripture words, he will tell you, he holdeth *Christ* to be a God, that by *Christs* blood we have remission of sinnes: but then come to ask him, In what sense *Christ* is a God, and in what manner we have remission of sinnes by *Christs* death? then the poison of the *Viper* doth break forth. So if we contend with the *Pelagian*, *Arminian*, and others, about the injury they doe to the Grace of *Christ*, they will tell you, they are for *Christ*, they doe owne all the Texts of Scripture that speak of grace. But then ask, what they mean by grace? And how farre they extend the efficacy of grace? then their deceit will appear. So that it is true of most Hereticks, *ὁμοία λαλοῦσι, ἀνόμοια δὲ νοοῦσι*, They speake the same words, but doe not thinke the same things. Let then all *fleshly wisdom* be abhorred, whereby we goe to the Scripture onely to apply the words thereof to our lies, and so would father them upon the Spirit of God; not that we love the purity and holinesse of the Scriptures, but because we cannot be received with any approbation, unlesse we bring our authority, pretended at least from that. Therefore it falleth out many times, as *Tertullian* observeth, When such erroneous persons can no longer hide themselves by Scripture-words, that they directly fall to accuse the Scripture, either to deny it to be the word of God, or debasing of it, as but a dead letter, that so their corrupt hearts may be more believed, than the Scripture it self.

Secondly,



Secondly, A ſecond principle of *fleſhly wiſdome*, is, *To hide and conceal thoſe monſtrous births we have brought forth, or elſe ſecretly and in a clandestine manner to acquaint others with them, that ſo many weak perſons may be infected before thoſe who are able and ſkilfull had any opportunity to gainſay them.* 2 Pet. 2. 1. The Apoſtle Peter ſpeaketh of ſome, *Who ſhould privily bring in damnable hereſies: Privily*, becauſe as the thief hateth the light, ſeeing he onely comes to ſteale: ſo do thoſe who vent their falſe errours delight in ſecreſie, becauſe the light will quickly manifeſt their falſhoods. As it is with Moles, all the while they are under ground, you can hardly take them; but if once above ground, then they are preſently deſtroyed: Thus all the while errours and falſhoods creep under ground, will not come to the light, they are hardly diſcovered and ſtopped: but when once found out, then they are eaſily overcome. Now all this is but *fleſhly wiſdome*, to appear no where but in the dark, to be alwayes hiding our ſelves under ground. Therefore they are ſaid, 2 Tim. 3. 6. *To creep in to houſes*, as thieves do by night; they doe all things cloſely and ſecretly, not willing to be brought to the light: Whereas we have our Saviour profeſſing the clean contrary concerning himſelf, John 18. 20. *I ſpake openly to the world, I ever taught in the Synagogue, and in the Temple, whither the Jewes reſort, and in ſecret have I ſaid nothing.* Thus the Miniſters of Chriſt imitate him in an open publick way. Not but that in times of perſecution, the Diſciples of Chriſt have had their private meetings, and have fled from the wrath of Magiſtrates, which the Apoſtle attributeth to the faith of the godly, not their fear, Heb. 11. 37. Only when it was a caſe of confeſſion, and their duty publickly to give teſtimony to the truths of God, then no torments could make them decline it.

2. To hide our errours, or elſe ſecretly to infect others with them.



## SERM. XCIV.

### *Principles of Fleſhly Wiſdome uſed in the Propagation of the Goſpel.*

2 COR. 1. 12.

*Not with fleſhly wiſdome.*

**W**E are deſcribing the ſeveral particulars of *fleſhly wiſdome*, which men have made in the matters of Religion, all which are renounced by the Apoſtle in this Text.

The firſt in order I ſhall now propound is, *To advance thoſe men who have been of their way, by lies attributing glorious things to them, and as much diſparaging and falſly accusing all ſuch who have been in a contrary way of Religion to them.* This hath been the ſubtil policy and ſtratagem in the Church of Rome. For no Church in the world hath abounded more in *fleſhly wiſdome* then ſhe hath done. How notoriously abſurd and ridicu-

More principles of fleſhly wiſdom in propagating Religion.

1. To advance thoſe of their own way, and diſgrace others



lous are they in relating many foolish miracles done by their Saints? Yea they attribute many wonderfull things to some as Saints, when there were never any such persons in the world, as many learned Writers hold there were never such persons as *St George*, and *St Christopher*, and yet what fabulous miracles are reported of them? And truly to read the lives of their Popish Saints, would make a man nauseate their Religion, they are written by such who did so much serve their affections, and drive on their designs: Which made *Cannus*, even a Papist, complaine of it, though he saith he doth, *Dolenter dicere magis quam contumeliose*, *speake it with grief rather than with reproach*. The lives of *Heathens* (saith he) [*Cannus loc. Theolog. Lib. 11. cap. 6.*] are written with more truth by *Heathenish Writers*, then of *Saints* by *Catholicke Writers*. *Laertius* hath more faithfully related the lives of the *Philosophers*, and *Suetonius* the lives of the *Cæsars*, then ours have done the lives of *Saints*. Which maketh him goe on, and say, *That he who wrote that Booke, which is called Aurea Legenda, was a man Ferrei oris, and Plumbei cordis: He that wrote the Golden Legend, was a man of an iron Fore-head, and a leaden-Heart*. Now all this is nothing but *fleshly wisdom*, not to regard the truth: But onely what will make for advantage; whereas we may see wonderfull sincerity in the *Apostles* in this very matter; They did use no *fleshly wisdom* at all, but doe record their owne infirmities as well as miracles. Doth not the *Evangelist Matthew* relate how he was a *Publican*? Is not *Peter's* deniall of his Master, in all the aggravations of it recorded? Are not the strifes of the *Disciples* about primacy mentioned? Doe we not read of *Paul* and *Barnabas* their sharp contention? Did not *Paul* withstand *Peter* to the face, because he was worthy to be reprov'd? Certainly the want of *fleshly wisdom*, and carnall policy in the *Apostles*, doing all things with sincerity and integrity, as well when it maketh against them as for them, doth plainly evidence, that they were of *God*. *Christ* doth not need the concealment of our imperfections. The more unworthy the instruments are, the more is his glory in bringing about his ends by them. Thus *Austin* was not ashamed to leave to the world a publick confession of his youthfull vanities and follies. And *Beza* doth *μαρτυριάζειν*, expose himselfe to shame upon that very word, *Matth. 1. 19.* where shewing that in *Plutarch* one *Archilochus* a Poet, for dishonest verses which he had made, he did *μαρτυριάζειν*, expose himselfe to shame, *Quod mihi aliquando accidit, &c.* Which was once my case (saith he) while a young man, and not yet admitted into the Church; which blot, I hope, I have washed away both by sayings and deeds. He was a *Papist* while he made those wanton verses: Therefore they need not upbraid him so for them, especially seeing he manifested his repentance for them. Therefore *Beza* did say of his adversaries, *Isti homines invident mihi gratiam Dei*. These men envy me the grace of *God*. As *fleshly wisdom* is scene thus in an hyperbolical admiration of men of our own way, not at all taking notice of their imperfections: so is it no lesse manifest in the dispraising, disgraceing and falsely traducing those who are dissentients from us. This is *fleshly wisdom* to disgrace and caluminate those who are against us by forged lies. As the *Heathens* of old said, *The Christians worshipped an Asses head*, and that at their love-feasts all wantonnesse and uncleannesse were committed. It is *Bel-larmine's* boast, *That no Catholickes are found to praise the Doctrine or lives of Heretikes*, which is it selfe false. For to omit many instances, *Stapleton* saith of *Calvin*, though he subjoyneth enough to marre all, *That he is an Interpreter for the letter of the Scripture, Ita diligens, ita elegans, ita suavis, &c.* (*In Antid. Evang. in Prefat.*) So diligent, so elegant,



elegant, so sweet that many Papists did reade him. Yea (saith he) I have heard many wish that those things which are disputed in his Commentaries against the Church, and its faith, were taken out, and then they would be very greatly usefull. But if it were true, that no Papists did praise the Protestants; this is not for their honour, but reproach; it being a duty to acknowledge the gifts and abilities that are in men, though we abominate their errors and vices. So that it is wholly *fleshly wisdom* in them thus to suppress the excellency of those who are against them. Yea, if they stayed here, it were pardonable; but they doe most prodigiously vent, and publish horrible lies about *Luther* and *Calvin*, as if they had beene moniters of men for their impieties. But all this is wisdom from the Devil, and God hath turned all their cursing into blessing.

In the second place, It is *fleshly wisdom* to maintaine any such pernicious and deceitfull Doctrines, as doe maintaine falshood and deceit, and thereby as much as lieth in them, overthrow all humane societies. The *Priscillians* of old did maintaine, That it was lawfull to lie, and sweare; and say any thing, so that they kept the heart pure. And the *Papists* (I meane the *Jesuites* ones) they come neare them; for they doe professedly dispute for the lawfullnesse of *Equivocation* and *Mental Reservation*; yea they call it prudence. And as the *Pelagians* of old, who privately to their Disciples, did plainly declare their opinions, but in publick spake craftily and ambiguously, thereby to deceive others, as if they were Orthodox, alledging Christs example, who to the multitude spake in Parables, but opened them plainly to his Disciples: so would these fasten upon Christ, and holy men recorded in Scripture, instances of equivocation. But the Scripture commands us, To lay aside lying, speaking every man the truth to his neighbour, Ephes. 4. 25. And this is subjoynd as a necessary consequent of putting on the new man. *Austin* wrote much against this way of lying. And certainly seeing that words are appointed to signifie our mind to another; if we pervert them to the contrary end to deceive them, we doe overthrow the foundation of spiritual and civil societies. It is one thing indeed not to reveale all the truth, when not required, or commanded, this may sometimes be done; but to deny the truth, or equivocate, this doth no wayes become those, who with sincerity, and not with *fleshly wisdom*, are to propagate the Gospel. If you say, for all the Church of *Rome* hath used such carnal policy, yet she continueth in her externall prosperity, she is not blasted and crossed in her designs: and therefore *Bellarmino* would take advantages of the Protestants by this, If (saith he) the Church of *Rome* be so vile and impure as you say she is; if she use all those unlawfull and ungodly wayes to keep up her glory, then it's the greater argument, that her constitution is of God, that all her craft and wickednesse hath not yet ruined her. But to this doubt it is easily answered, That by the Scripture we know it is foretold, that he must prevaile for a long time in the Church: and therefore their successe, notwithstanding all their cruelty and craft, is not to be any stumbling block to such who believe the scriptures.

The third instance of *fleshly wisdom* to propagate Religion by, is, To indulge men in their lusts and sinnes, that so the party which followeth them, may be the more numerous. This is *fleshly wisdom* in an high degree of impiety; and yet in this also the Church of *Rome* hath beene notorious, when other Churches have by their good Discipline, cast out some offenders for scandalous impieties; They have appealed to the Church of *Rome* in that case, and she craftily laying hold

on

2. To maintain false doctrines that overthrow humane society.

3. To indulge men in sin, and to increase Disciples.



on the opportunity, hoping thereby to establish her Supremacy, would like *Absolom* say to every one that came, that his cause was good; and by this policy in indulging and encouraging such licentious offenders, whom other Churches would not endure as members: At last with other politick devices, she arrived to that amplitude of power, she now glorieth in. We might instance in other subtil forgeries, as the corrupting or denying some Canons made in the Council of *Nice*, thereby to translate the chief Patriarchship to her self; a famous cheat, and discovered most palpably to the shame of the *Romane* party, of which there is much in *Ecclasiastical Authors*; as also the pretence of *Constantines* donation, a forged lie like the rest. This I shall insist upon, as greatly considerable, *The indulging of people in prophanesse*, as also in horrible ignorance, that so they may rule without controll. And how well were it if this *fleshy wisdom* were inclosed in the *Romane* Conclave? Are there not too many in the Protestant Churches, that out of a desire either to please men, or increase their earthly advantages promote a promiscuous admission of all to the Lords Table, making no difference betweene the clean and unclean. This I confesse is the way to be applauded by the most: This is that which will give best content to all: This is accounted wisdom and moderation; but *Wisdom* is justified of her children; and the holy institution of Christ, will be owned by those who worship God in Spirit and truth: But this *fleshy wisdom* whereby we please all, and indulge men in their lusts, is seldom successful; but fire will come out of the Bramble, when it doth not out of the Fig-tree to consume: I meane even prophane and wicked spirits are many times stirred up by God to oppose such corrupt Teachers, when the godly meddle not at all. For God doth many times make use of the wickednesse of one ungodly man, to torment another. Yea *Luther's* first stirrings against the abuses of Popery, were not so pure and sincere, as afterwards when the light and grace of God came more upon him. It is therefore a great duty ineumbent upon the Ministers of the Gospel, to walk sincerely by Christs rule in their pastoral exercises, avoiding this *fleshy wisdom*, which though it may seeme sometimes to prevent a mischief, yet as it did to *David*, doth afterwards plunge in a greater calamity. And indeed going to carnal policy in Church-administrations, is but like going to witches and wizards, forsaking Gods way, which never bringeth a perfect cure.

4. To propound fleshly ends.

Fourthly, Then is carnal wisdom used to propagate Religion, When by it we propound carnal and selfish ends to our selves, not the glory of God, and advancing the power and purity of his Ordinances. This is that which *Paul* doth principally disclaim, *I seek not you but yours*, saith he in this Epistle, 2 Cor. 12. 14. And that they might be perswaded hereof, he would take no maintenance of them, but made use of other Churches, that he might spare them; yea sometimes working with his own hands. How farre this is imitable by the Ministers of the Gospel now, as many do upbraid them with this example of *Paul*, will be clearly and fully evidenced (God assisting in its time) for we shall meet with this part of *Paul* expressly mentioned and insisted on by him in this Epistle. But it is worth the observation, that *Paul* by no way he took, could escape the slander of a self-seeker. For if in that case he had burdened the Church of *Corinth*, the false Apostles would have calumniated him, as using a cloak of covetousness, and seeking himself: But now because he will not do so, see how this is interpreted as a carnal designe also; for so he bringeth in their objection, vers. 16, *Be it so, I did not burden you, but being crafty, I tooke you with guile*. This was suggested against *Paul*, they made this construction of

*Paul's*



Paul's not burdening them, that he did this out of craft, that they should think themselves the more engaged unto him; and so by this means, he get the more dominion over them. Thus what shall Paul do, if he doth not take maintenance, it is his craft, and if he doth, it is his craft? By this instance we see, how much we are to avoid all *fleshly wisdom*, for do what we will, it shall be charged upon us. Only when we have this sincerity of conscience within to comfort and support us, this will be a means to make us bear the slanders of enemies with greater alacrity. Now as we said, then we may certainly conclude, we are guided by *fleshly wisdom*; when our aimes in our ministerial way is either glory, and applause, which was the poison of the *Pharisees* duties; or earthly wealth and external pomp; which motives do easily creep in, unlesse grace be the porter to keep the door of the soul. We see even the Disciples themselves, and that twice contending about superiority; and once this was done when our Saviour was fore-telling them of his sad sufferings, and how they should be scattered. And truly this should much prevail with us to walk by sincere rules, because nothing doth more awe peoples hearts, nothing doth more erect a throne of fear and reverence in mens hearts, so much as integrity. Even Herod did fear John, because he was a just man; he saw he was not carried by carnal principles, and that made Herod reverence him, *Mark 6. 20.* And thus it was with Christ himself also, this made the people so greatly flock after him, because the Hypocrisie and self-seeking of the *Pharisees* began to be made clear to them. And thus the integrity of our Reformers was precious: whereas the luxury, pride and ambition of the *Roman* Clergy began to be apparent. Yea before Luther's time, the Church generally groaned under them, which made *Berengarius* call them *Romanos Pompifices*, and *Pulpifices*, as regarding their pompe and belly more than their ministerial duty.

Lastly, (For the differences I promised to speak to between *fleshly wisdom*, and *heavenly wisdom*, as also civil prudence, may be considered in the next particular.) *Fleshly wisdom* is seen, In glorying and boasting of humane eloquence and philosophical demonstrations. This some make to be a great part of, if not the only sense of *fleshly wisdom*. And certainly this is that which Paul renounceth, 1 Cor. 2. 1, 3, 4. the end whereof was, that their faith might not stand in the wisdom of men, but the power of God. And therefore the *Thessalonians* are commended, 1 Thess. 2. 13. That they received the Gospel, not as the word of men, but as of God, which effectually worketh in those that believe. That there may be no use made of humane learning, much lesse that it is not lawfull to improve the gifts and abilities of learned men in our Ministry, I think is scarcely in an absolute sense denied by any orthodox. But then they give this Caution, That such things must not be done out of ostentation, but edification, and conviction; neither must we so preach that our auditors should be more affected with the oratory or learning, than the matter, the gifts and parts of a Minister, more than the holy truths which are delivered for information and conversion. And therefore as we the Ministers of the Gospel are to take heed of all *fleshly wisdom*, especially this latter, which is so subtil a thief, ready to steal away our treasure: So ought you the hearers to take heed of all *fleshly wisdom*. For it is this only maketh you go away unconverted, unhumiliated, unreformed, your conscience, your mind condemns you for it, but only *fleshly wisdom* will not let you obey. As (I say) we are to take heed of this universally; so especially that you do not regard the parts, learning and oratory of a Minister more than holy matter. You must hear from a sincere heart, you must come to our Ministry with godly simplicity, as well as we are to preach so; and it is hard to say, whether is more difficult, to preach without *fleshly wisdom*, or hear without it. Do you desire to know nothing, but *fo-*  
ns



*Jesus Christ crucified?* Are ye not like children that look upon Books, more to see the gayes and gaudy flourishes, than the matter contained therein? Do ye not mind more what may tickle your ear, please your fancy, then what may wound your heart? *Aristotle* even to his Lecture of moral Philosophy, doth require one who is purged from his lusts. How much rather is the word of God to be received with a pure and mortified heart? Oh this *fleshy wisdom* will prove cursed folly at last! In the flames of hell thou wilt cry out of this, Oh wretch that I was, I thought to be wise for my self, and how unspeakably am I undone thereby!



## S E R M, X C V.

*Of the Grace of God which Paul exalteth  
above Fleshly Wisdom, and ascribeth all  
unto.*

2 C O R. I. 12.

*But by the grace of God.*

**T**He third particular, which qualifyeth the Apostles conversation in this world, cometh in order to be treated on, which is set down *Oppositely*, *But by the grace of God.* This is added, partly to exclude all pride and presumption in himself. For having declared his integrity, lest it might be thought, that though he did not confide in carnal wisdom, yet he might in his own integrity; he addeth, *The grace of God*; shewing thereby, that he trusted in that alone. And then partly it is spoken, in opposition to *fleshy wisdom*. For seeing it might be demanded, If *Paul* did not use the wisdom of the world, How could it come about, that he should have such success in his preaching, that the Gospel should have such a full and glorious course by his Ministry? He resolveth it into the *grace of God*, that did go along with him: it was neither his gifts, or his graces, but the power and grace of God, directing and protecting of him, in his ministerial imployment. Thus *Paul* and *Barnabas*, Acts 14. 26. are by the brethren recommended to the *grace of God* for the work, which they fulfilled. So that whereas the word *Grace* in the New Testament, hath several significations; the principal whereof is the *favour and meer mercy of God without us*. The lesse principal, is the *Effects thereof*; and the Effects of this Grace, are either of sanctification, or administration and service. We may comprehend all these in the word [*Grace*], but especially the latter, the effects of grace; and of those effects, chiefly those ministerial gifts, with the success thereof, that *Paul* was enriched with. What is this *grace of God*, saith *Chrysostome*? It is (saith he) the wisdom and power God bestowed upon him, whereby through miracles and other wayes, especially, that coming without humane learning, and oratory of the world, he did



did overcome the greatest Philosophers and Rhetoricians, whom the world did admire. This was the grace of God upon Paul, which he also mentioneth as the original of all the fruit of his labours, not attributing any thing to himself, 1 Cor. 15. 10. *I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*

Now although by grace is meant principally the grace called, *Gratiis data*, common ministerial gifts and favours of God, yet because it is opposed to *fleshly wisdom* and carnal policy. There is also necessarily contained *heavenly wisdom*, whereby Paul did avoid all sensual and deceitfull wayes, walking closely according to the Word, the fountain of all spiritual wisdom. For as the Scriptures are a farre surer Rule, even to Civil Governours and Magistrates, then Tacitus, Machiavel, or others, cryed up by humane, worldly wise men, even in their civil administrations: So much more is it a sure Starre for all the spiritual Officers of the Church to manage their affaires by, if they do look for successe. From the Scripture both Magistrates and Ministers may learne wisdom for their respective administrations. Paul therefore, what ever it be that goeth on prosperously in his ministerial worke, doth not attribute it either to his sincerity, much lesse to any humane policy, which he renounceth, but wholly to the grace of God assisting of him, and going constantly along with him. Observe,

*That it is the property of those who are godly to take nothing to themselves, but to give all to the grace of God.*

The godly ascribe all to the grace of God.

You see here, though Paul was so eminent for godlinesse, and so admirable for gifts, yet he maketh the *grace of God* to be alone the sole Author of all spiritual successe. This subject the Apostle doth very willingly enlarge himself upon, wheresoever he hath occasion: Hence in the fore-mentioned place, 1 Corin. 15. 10. he saith, *By the grace of God I am what I am.* The *grace of God* made him an holy man; The *grace of God* made him an eminent Apostle; he had nothing as a private Christian, or as an Officer, but by the *grace of God*; and because many may have grace in a common way bestowed upon them, that yet abuse it, as Judas; he addeth, *This grace was not in vain.* Yet lest it should be thought that it was his improvement of the grace bestowed, that made it so effectual, he presently correcteth his expression, *Yet not I, but the grace of God*, which was *with me*. As it is not the pen, but the Writer that is a cause of fair Characters.

Let us discover this Doctrine. And

First, We see the Apostle rejoicing in the sincerity of his heart, and yet acknowledging all to the *grace of God*; so that these two may well stand together to take comfort from our holinesse, yet to put our trust in nothing but the *grace of God*. It is true, this is a very hard lesson to performe, there is required much skill and prudence herein; for we are apt to runne into extreames: Either through unbelief and peevishnesse, we nourish doubts and perplexing thoughts in our selves, not taking notice of the *grace of God* in us: Or else, if we doe behold it, and rejoyce in it, we are presently in a secret manner lifted up, and confident thereby. But we see by the Apostles practice, both are consistent together: So that the people of God are diligently to labour after this heavenly frame of heart. To be in doubts and fears about thy condition, is to live in the jaws of hell, and to be presuming or carnally confident of thy graces, is the next door to a sad and miserable downfall.

1. A man may take comfort in his own holinesse, and yet trust only in Gods grace.



2. All is to be given unto grace.

Secondly, *It is not enough to acknowledge the grace of God in the general, but so to set up grace as to give all to it.* The Apostle maketh an immediate opposition between *grace* and *workes*, Rom. 11. 6. there cannot be a reconciling of *grace* and *workes* together. This hath been often attempted, but as unhappily as the building up the walls of *Jericho* again. The *Pelagian*, *Arminian*, the *Socinian* and *Papist*, all these doe acknowledge *grace*; but when we come to the root of the matter, it's nothing at last, but the *free-will and workes of a man*. It is his good use of *grace*, that doth determine and make all things effectual, not *grace* it self: And this is the rather to be noted, because *Stapleton* would antidote against *Calvin's* poison, as he speaketh from this Text. For whereas *Calvin* taking notice of the Apostles glorying, in the testimony of his conscience concerning his sincerity, doth shew, that *Paul* hereby doth not oppose that command, *Let him that glorieth glory in the Lord*, because *Paul* giveth all to the *grace of God*, and resteth alone upon that. From this, *Stapleton* would excuse the *Papists* also, because they acknowledge all good workes to come from *grace*: Their merits are founded onely upon *Christs* merits. Even as it doth not derogate from the power of *God*, that he useth second causes in natural things, because they are subordinate to him, both in their being and operation; but it doth illustrate as his bounty, so his power the more to make other things powerfull: Thus saith he, it is not injurious to the *grace* and merits of *Christ*, if we attribute merit to our workes, seeing this cometh onely from *Christ*; but it argueth his fullnesse and rich *grace* the more, that communicateth of it to us. So that (saith he) to put trust in the workes of *grace*, as the proxim and immediate cause, but in the *grace of God*, as the chiefe and universal cause, is no derogation to the honour and glory of *Christ*. But that of the Apostle must be alwayes remembred, *If of grace, then not of workes, otherwise grace is no more grace.* It is not *grace*, unlesse it be *grace every way*: And therefore to make our workes the second causes to trust in, though it be not so high a wickednesse as to exclude *Christ* thoroughly, yet it doth in part, and therefore as in the matter of worship, we admit of no primary and secondary worship, no more than a primary and secondary *God*: So it is in matter of trusting, we must depend onely upon *Christ*, not but that holinesse and godly workes are necessarily required, but not as causes under any subtil distinctions whatsoever.

What is that *grace* the Apostle exalteth against fleshly wisdom.

1. That *grace* whereby he was converted.

These two things premised, let us now consider, *What is that grace which the Apostle doth here exalt against all fleshly wisdom.* And

First, As the ground-work of all, there is to be understood, *That grace of God, whereby he was called out of that pharisaical estate, and condition of enmity against Christ, to be a faithfull and ready servant to him.* This wonderfull *grace of God* to him, doth often melt the heart of *Paul*, he speaketh of it with aggravating particulars, as much as may be. Thus *Galat. 1, 15.* *When it pleased God, who called me by his grace, to reveale his Sonne in me, &c.* And therefore *1 Tim. 1. 15, 16.* he acknowledged himself an instance, *(Because the chiefest of sinners,)* of the long-suffering of *Christ*. In *Paul's* conversion there were no preparations, no merits of congruity, there was no docible and fitted dispositions: Insomuch that the adversaries to *Gods* *grace* do acknowledge *Paul's* conversion to be an extraordinary thing. In the midst of his persecuting fury, when *God* might have struck him dead with thunder and lightnings from Heaven, and so send him quick (as it were) to Hell; *God* did visit him with his *grace*, and give him another heart, to his own amazement, and of all those who heard of it. So if you look upon *Paul* in a single capacity, as a private person in the whole course of his life, he giveth all to the *grace of God*.

Secondly,



Secondly, *The grace of God*, which Paul doth also greatly exalt, is, *In the setting of him apart to be an Apostle, and an eminent Officer in the Church of God.* This crooked and rough timber, that was onely fit for the fire, God doth not onely polish and smooth by grace, but advanceth it to be an eminent part in the building; notwithstanding all Paul's former unworthinesse, God doth not onely by his grace call him, but maketh him an honourable vessel in his house. This our Apostle doth likewise with great enlargement, in many places take great notice of. See how emphatically is he affected with this grace of God towards him, *Ephesians 3. 7, 8. Whereof I was made a Minister according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me,—unto me, who am lesse than the least of all Saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ.* Doe not these words proclaime how greatly his heart is affected with the grace of God, in setting him apart to be an Officer in his Church, and to proclaim the Gospel to the Gentiles? Thus the grace of Conversion, and the grace of Apostleship, are a two-fold obligation upon Paul, for ever to keep him humble, and lowly in his own eyes.

Thirdly, The grace of God exalted by Paul, is seen, *In the enabling of him in his ministerial worke, and going along with him in an effectual manner.* That whereas he had so many adversaries, the false Apostles, who gloried in humane wildome, and all external enticements of the flesh of man; yet for all that, that his seeming folly should conquer their towering wildome, that his contemptiblenesse should surmount their eminency; This argued that it was not Paul, but the grace of God with him, that was thus effectuell. Even as it was not little David in his own power, but in the name of the Lord, that did destroy that vaunting Goliath.

Now as there were many choice ingredients that did make up that precious ointment, which was to be poured on the head of the Highpriest: So there are also many choice and gracious qualifications, with the Concomitants thereof, required in those who are Pastours over people, especially in the Apostles, who were Pastours over Pastours, as well as people. As

First, It was the gracious worke of God, *To make Paul to be sincere, and to walke in all plainnesse and integrity of heart;* whereas we see many in the broaching of their false wayes, are filled with great deceit and subtilty. The Apostle chargeth upon such, who deliver false Doctrines, *Ephes. 4. 14. By cunning craftinesse and sleight of men, they lie in wait to deceive.* Those that are false Prophets in the Church of God, they have *μαρτυρία*, and *ρυσία*, and *ἀπαρξάν*, *A strange slighty juggling, and even bewitching of men*, but it is from the grace of God, that those who are his true Ministers are sincere and upright: They have an agreement betweene their heart and tongue. It was the speech of one reading Lectures in the Popish Schooles, *Sic dico, quando sum in Scholis, sed penes nos sit; aliter sentio. I speake thus when I am in the Schooles, but to tell you a secret, I thinke otherwise.* It was also a boast of another (*Fredericus Staphylus*) That he had so many yeares beene a professor of Divinity in the Schooles, and yet no hearer was able to tell what judgement he was of. (*Gerhardi Cathol. Confessio lib. 1. par. 2. cap. 19.*) Now this craft and dissimulation in the old Dragon and his seed, is no wonder; but the Ministers of Christ, as they believe with their heart, so they make confession with their mouths, and dare not but reveale the whole counfel of God. It was horrible impudence in *Melanthus the Grecian*, who having got a King-

2. That grace whereby he was made an Apostle.

3. That grace whereby he was enabled and prospered in his Ministry

As, 1. It was the grace of God that made Paul sincere.



done by fraud and deceit, did in honour thereof, as if it were pleasing to their gods, appoint Festivals, calling them *drachmæ*, as much as *counting* and *deceiving*, inculcating that of the Poet, *Doctus an virtus, quis in hoste requiritur.* (Capel. Histor. An. Mund. 2872.) Certainly the Church of Rome, and many other Hereticks have gone by no better Rule, counting gaine godlinesse, counting lying and dissembling godlinesse, when they conceived, that it made for their end. As if they were of that Kings mind *Darius Hystaspes*, that to lie and speake truth, were all one: For he that spake truth did so to obtain his desires, and so he that lied did no more, and therefore both truth and a lie were all one. (Vide Laurent. Vul. 31. *sat. cap. 1. pag. 30.*) But oh how abominable is this, and contrary to the Spirit of Christ! The grace of God in such who are his faithfull Ministers, maketh them not to turn into such false and crooked wayes, though the preaching of the truths of Christ bringeth much hatred and opposition, though they know they are unwelcome and despised, and that for their very message sake, yet they consult not with *fleshy wisdom*, but doe the work of God zealously and with much faithfulness. And truly the Ministers of God are much to pray for this grace of God upon them, that they may be above all humane fears, all sinfull compliances, and be afraid of nothing, but that they should sinne, and not preach the Gospel with that boldnesse as they ought to do. That great commendation which the spies gave Christ, upon a wicked designe, is to be endeavoured after by every faithfull Minister of Christ, *Luke 20. 20. Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly.* So that you see this sincerity in the Ministers of God, is the special effect of Gods grace towards them.

And therefore let us make an Use of Admonition to all such as desire to serve God in the way of the Ministry, that above all things they would pray to God for this grace: To have the Ministerial conversation with much wisdom and learning, with great applause and glory in the world, is nothing so advantageous as the integrity of spirit. This is above parts, above gifts, above books, and all learning: It is said of *Barnabas*, *Act. 11. 24. He was a good man, full of the holy Ghost, and of faith, and much people was added to the Lord:* This followed as a blessed effect upon the former. If we Ministers had more mighty workings of Gods Spirit in us, we should find more mighty workings of his Spirit with us.





SERM. XCVI.

Wherein the Grace of God appeared towards Paul in his Ministerial Labours.

2 COR. 1.12.

But by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.

**W**E are enumerating the particulars of that grace, which the Apostle doth especially acknowledge in his ministerial course. We proceed therefore, and

First, The faithfulness of Paul to his Apostolical trust, fixing his heart upon that, and using no other means, then what are proportionable and commensurate to such a noble end, was wholly of the grace of God towards him. It is required of Stewards, that they be found faithful, saith this Apostle, 1 Cor. 4. 2. and with this grace God had honoured him. In so much that we do not find in Paul any halting, any carnal complaisance, which might contradict the holy end of his Apostolical Office. Those are two noble expressions, 2 Cor. 10. 8. Our authority the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for destruction. The other is, 2 Cor. 13. 8. For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. In these Texts we have expressed the end of all ministerial power, it is for edification: And therefore if any through the Word preached be more hardened in their sinnes, and made more obdurate in their evil wayes, this is besides the intention of the Word. As when the Sunne blindeth a mans eyes through the dazzeling thereof, this is accidental, the proper and natural effect, being to illuminate, all spiritual authority is for edification. And in the other Text, you have the power of grace upon Paul's heart, so affecting of him, that he cannot do any thing against the truth. Neither doctrinally or practically would he indulge to any evil way; but thereby the end of his Ministry should be frustrated. Now this is a special work of Gods grace so to sanctifie, and keep tender our hearts, that we take heed of every thing that may obstruct the happy course of the Gospel: Whereas the Jesuitical party will wander out into many by and extravagant wayes, to accomplish their delignes. *Janſenius* a learned Papist (*Janſen. Sanctus Augustinus liber proamialis, pag. 9.*) speaketh of one man, who not daring to do something out of favour to another, which he knew was contrary to the principles of morality; neither affirmed by any Authors, as probable, had this answer from a Jesuited Doctor, *Aude, & nos efficiemus probabile.* Be bold to do it, and we will make it probable. Here we see, their power is many times against the truth. But Paul was so kept by the grace of God, that not only deliberately he did not any thing which might retard the progresse of the Gospel; but also nor so much as by infirmity,

What were those graces which the Apostle acknowledged in his Ministry  
1. Faithfulness

or



or any sudden surprizal, as we see *Peter* did, and therefore *Paul* did withstand him to the face. This therefore is a blessed worke of Gods grace, when a Minister is kept so faithfully to the end of his Office, that neither in life or doctrine, will he doe any thing, that may be contrary to it.

2. Humility.

Secondly, The grace of God extended itself mercifully to *Paul*, In that he was kept low and humble under all those signal favours and prerogatives that God hath bestowed upon him. Was not every thing in *Paul* almost extraordinary and miraculous, and yet who is kept lower in his own eyes, who is more emptied of himself, looking upon what he had been, more than what he was? So that it was of Gods grace to *Paul*, to make him acknowledge Gods grace not to trust in himself. And thus it is alwayes in the Church of God, one special work of Gods grace, is to make us sensible of it, to give all to it, to goe out of our selves: and thus Gods fulnesse is most seene in our emptinesse. We see the *Jewes* went about wholly to establish their own righteousnesse. The *Stoick* Philosophers, who did so admire vertue, were thereby advancers of themselves: They looked upon virtue as their own work, that they were not beholding to God for it. Therefore *Seneca* maketh this the cause and foundation of all happinesse, *Fidere sibiipfi, to trust in himself*. And the *Pelagian*, though Christian, yet his Doctrine driveth wholly to self-advancement. So that though he would acknowledge the necessity of that prayer, *Forgive us our sinnes* (yet so as when we had sinned, otherwise they pleaded perfection, and that a man might be without sinne) yet for the ensuing Petition, *Lead us not into temptation, &c.* They would not understand it of spiritual temptations and occasions to sinne, as if we needed to pray to God for grace to prevent future sinnes, our own will and strength was sufficient for that; but of external miseries, such as not to fall off an horse, or to be killed by a thiefe: These were the temptations onely we prayed against in this Petition. But where the grace of God is effectually working, there it maketh a man apprehensive of the necessity of it; and that to every action all the day long: and truly this is from God; when the Minister of the Gospel shall go out of all parts, learning and studies whatsoever, acknowledging it's the grace of God alone that inableth him in his work: happily this would make the presence of God more powerfull with us, if we did own his grace more.

3. Guidance and direction in his preaching and meditations.

Thirdly, The grace of God with *Paul* in his ministerial imployment, was, The directing of him in meditations, and guiding of him to such thoughts and words as might most prevaile upon those that beare him. For this we must know, that where Gods presence is with a Minister, there he is directed to preach on such subject matter, rather than other which God will blesse to a most happy and effectual issue. This made *Paul* say excellently, *2 Cor. 5. 6. Not that we are sufficient to think anything of our selves, but our sufficiency is of God, who hath made us able Ministers of the New Testament*. Here you see *Paul* acknowledging, that we are not able to think one thought in our ministerial way advantageous for the edification of others without the grace of God. As in prayer, we know not what to pray, or how to pray, without the Spirit of God inabling: So neither in preaching, we know not what to preach, or how to preach, unlesse the Lord guide us. That is observable, *Eccles. 12. 9, 10. Because the preacher was wise, he taught the people knowledge, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words*. By this we see, that there is special wisdom to search out fit matter and fit words, which cannot be obtained without God the fountain of wisdom. So that herein the Minister of God is to exercise himself daily in prayer to God, that he would teach him how to preach, and what

to



to preach, that he may not sow chaff instead of wheat, and cockles instead of barley, that he may be so directed, as to pitch upon those arguments, those expressions which will be most effectually working upon the souls of those that do hear.

Fourthly, The grace of God was wonderfully manifest in *Paul*, By the spirit of self-denial, patience, zeal, and courage which was in him, while accomplishing his worke. Indeed *Paul* is like a pleasant and choice Garden, wherein are so many precious flowers, that we know not which to pluck first. Thus *Paul* was so eminently bespangled with all the graces of Gods Spirit, that we know not which to commend first. His self-denial was admirable, when he complained, *All sought their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ*. This argued how much he did abhorre such courses, *Phil. 2. 21.* when he was so solicitous to bring off deluded souls from the false Apostles who reigned over them. It was not his honour or glory that he looked at, if so be they would own Christ and his wayes in truth; let him be rejected, he mattered it not. This he plainly professeth, *2 Cor. 13. 7. I pray God ye do no evil, not that we should be approved, but that you should do that which is honest, though we be accounted as reprobates.* It is plain therefore that it was their good, their salvation and glory, not his own that he aimed at. His patience also was no lesse remarkable, when he could quietly go through all the reproaches and calumnies that the false Apostles did charge upon him, especially his patience was even miraculous in those sufferings he was exercised with, for the Gospels sake. He that informed others, they had need of patience; how much more had he, being put to so many combates as he was? Yet under all this he fainted not, he forsook not Christ, and his cause; yea he rejoyced in his sufferings, and looked upon them as so many marks of honour. *2 Cor. 11. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.* you have a long Catalogue of the manifold bitter trials he was put upon; yet he was gold in this fire, he was wheat in this winnowing; he doth not complain of the cause of Christ he had espoused, as *Zipporah* to *Moses*, *Thou art a bloody husband*; yea in all these things, *He is more than a conquerour*, as *Rom. 8. 37.* For the greatest Conquerours do for the most part receive some losse; but these tribulations were so farre from making him a loser, that he was thereby a gainer. The grace of God was wonderfully in *Paul*, to make him so zealous for the Churches of Christ as he was; he learned of Christ himself to have the zeal of the Lords house to eat him up, *2 Cor. 11. 29. Who is offended, and I burn not?* There was nothing in the Church of God that fell out, which might be a stumbling block to any believer, which might any wayes tend to make such an one fall; but his heart was affected therein, as if it had been his own cause. Therefore in the fore-mentioned Chapter, *2 Cor. 11, 28.* he acknowledgeth the care of all the Churches to be upon him; and this made him so compassionately sympathizing with every member thereof. Thus *Paul* is like a spiritual *Atlas*, bearing up the Churches of God; not that he owneth himself in this, any further than to acknowledge the grace of God thereby to him. Now this zeal did necessarily imply publick affections, whereby *Paul* was enlarged in his soul towards the glory of God, and the good of others; which heavenly constitution doth necessarily suppose the grace of God: Man naturally making himself the utmost end of all his actions; and his own self-love, like *Pharaoh's* lean kine, doth devour and swallow up all that is before it. Is not that passage of his publick affection matter of amazement? *Rom. 9. 2, 3.* where he professeth his great heaviness, and continual sorrow of heart for the *Israelites*? Yea this did so farre possess him, that he saith, *I could wish my self accursed from Christ for their sake.* Such an high expression, that it hath troubled Interpreters, how to explain it, and make it lawfull; as if in publick affections, as well as private, that were true, *Difficile est amare & sapere*, It is hard to love, and to be wise also.

4 His patience, self-denial, zeal and courage.



also. Now this is a blessed effect of Gods grace upon the hearts of those who preach the Gospel, when they *preferre Jerusalem above all their joy*; when they preach not to live upon the Gospel, and to be maintained by the Gospel, but rather use these, as steps whereby they may ascend higher. That as the body is for the soul, not the soul for the body; so they make personal accommodations for the publick, not publick for the personal. Lastly, That I may not weary you out, the *courage and spiritual fortitude* that *Paul* did upon all occasions demonstrate, doth plainly demonstrate the grace of God towards him. The ministerial Office is compared to a souldiers employment, *2 Tim. 2. 3, 4.* where *Timothy* is commanded to *endure hardnesse as a souldier of Christ*: And because he is set apart for this spiritual warfare, therefore he *must not entangle himself with the affaires of this life*; and herein *Paul* did shew himself an excellent pattern. Was not he an excellent souldier, when *Phil. 4. 11, 12.* he had learned in *whatsoever estate, to be content*; he knew *how to abound, and how to want*, every where, and in all things. He must needs have spiritual fortitude that could thus endure hot and cold. No wonder then if at the close of his life, he hath this comfortable testimony from his conscience, *That he had fought a good fight*, *2 Tim. 4. 7.* This is that which maketh the ministerial work so difficult; we are to conflict with the lusts of men; we are to demolish the Kingdome of *Satan*; all our work, if faithfully discharged, breedeth nothing but the malice and opposition of ungodly men. And that this is wholly the gift of God, appeareth, *2 Tim. 1. 7.* *God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*; of power, that subdueth all worldly fear, and man-pleasing; yet lest this power should make us too harsh and austere, there is *love* to mollifie and sweeten it. For *Dilige & loquere quod vis*, said *Austin*, *Love, and then reprove as much as you will*. But lest love should make us foolish, and too indulgent, there is added a *sound mind*, as salt to season this Sacrifice. These are the qualifications of a Minister; but who giveth these? From whence doth this good and perfect gift come? *Even from the Father of lights*, *Jam. 1. 17.*

5. His heavenly wisdom.

Fifthly, The grace of God proclaimed by *Paul*, was, *In the heavenly wisdom that he did use in the managing of his Office*. For although he disclaimeth fleshly wisdom, yet he attributeth to himself true heavenly wisdom, he considered his auditours, what they were able to beare; he did not put new wine into old bottles; he had serpentine wisdom, though Dove-like innocency. Wisdom and discretion is the eye in the body of all our holy actions. Zeal without knowledge maketh a man like *Samson*, when his eyes are pulled out; though he pull down the house upon the *Philistims*, yet he himself is also destroyed thereby. *1 Cor. 3. 1, 2.* *I could not speake unto you, as spiritual, but as carnal. I fed you with milk, and not with meat.* *Argus* was not fuller of eyes, then a Minister is to be of wisdom and circumspection, to know the dispositions, capacities and temptations of the people to whom he preacheth. But above all the Ministers wisdom is seen in laying a good and sure foundation. This grace of God to him, *Paul* doth acknowledge, *1 Cor. 3. 10.* *According to the grace of God given to me, as a wise master-builder I have laid a foundation.* For if we be not in justification built upon Christ, and in practice carried beyond morality, yea and religious duties to a principle of regeneration within; All other building, though never so glorious, and applauded in the world, is but like an house built upon the sand, whose fall will be great, when tempests shall arise. It was from this wisdom that *Paul* said, *I became all things to all men, that I might save some*, *1 Cor. 9. 22.* Not in that sense as the *Jesuite* is said, *to become all things to all men*; for that



that is to save one, not to save, but rather destroy others: he did not sinfully comply with mens sinnes, but he did prudently accommodate himself to mens weaknesses, not defiling himself thereby, ~~that he might recover them~~ out of their weaknesses.

Lastly, The grace of God acknowledged by *Paul*, is, *The successe he had in his ministerial labours.* For though *Paul* was ~~in~~abled to doe many miracles to cure many diseased bodies, yet he could not open the eyes, or change the heart of any one man; whensoever therefore an effectual door was opened to him, in any place; this was Gods work, not *Paul's*, 1 Cor. 3. For though *Paul* planted, and *Apollos* watered, yet it is God that giveth the increase. Alas, it is not for a Minister to thinke his parts, his gifts, his learning, his diligent and zealous preaching shall bring men off from their wicked wayes. For though the Minister is to do his duty, yet his successe is of Gods grace onely: And therefore wonder not, if *Paul* triumph over all the learned and potent enemies of the Gospel, if *Paul's* contemptiblenesse overcome the *Gentiles* wisdom and excellency; for it's not *Paul*, but the grace of God with him that doth these wondrous things.

*Use of Admonition*, to us who are the Ministers of God, as we would have our studies, our labours, our ministerial employments have successe, to goe out of our parts and studies, and to importune the grace of God more. Thou art apt to thinke such expressions, such moving compassionate exhortations, such quick and penetrating arguments, will make men leave all their sinnes, and follow Christ, but looke up to Gods grace more, and take heed of any thing that may provoke God to withdraw his gracious presence from thy studies and ministerial labours.

*Use 2. Of Instruction.* Whence it is that the faithfull Ministry of God hath been upheld in all ages, when the Governours of the world have frowned on them, when endeavours have been to root it out, as a bitter plant not to be endured, when they themselves have been poor and weak, having neither outward greatnesse, or earthly policy to maintaine them; This is wholly from the grace of God. As the Arke was not overwhelmed in the waters, though it had no Pilot to guide it, because God took care of it.





## SERM. XCVII.

## Of a Good and Godly Conversation in the World.

2 COR. 1.12.

*We have had our conversation in the world.*

**W**E are come now to the thing testified it self, which is this, *We have had our conversation in the world.* So that herein is expressed the ground of his comfort, and that in two particulars:

1. It was his conversation, *αἰσχρολογία*. This word is used to signifie the way, as the Scripture calleth it, or the life, and constant customary practice of man. Sometimes *ἡ* is added to it, not that it can be our conversation, unlesse it be universal, and every where so. But for further aggravation, as 1 Pet. 1. 15. *But as he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.* If a man be holy at some times, or in some fits, but not constantly, he doth not resemble God, for God is holy in all his wayes. In every action, and all times, God doth manifest his holinesse, he is a God, and changeth not, is alwayes like himself: Thus it ought to be with the godly: No company, no condition, no temptations should make them change that holy way of life, they are to exercise themselves in. Hence also 2 Pet. 3. 11. we have it rendred in the plural number, *ἐν ἀγαθῶν ἔργων*, What manner of persons ought we to be in godly conversations; signifying, that the day of judgement powerfully believed, would have a strong influence upon every thought, word or action, that there cannot be any kind of godlinesse, though never so contrary to flesh and blood, but we should be thereby provoked to the accomplishment thereof. *Varinus* maketh the synonymous words to *ἀσέβεια*, *ἥτις*, and *πλὴν*, that which is our perpetual exercise and life, as it were. Indeed there is the word *πλῆν* rendered conversation, Phil. 3. 20. and so *πλῆν* is used, Act. 23. 1. as also Philip. 1. 27. *Let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel*; but *πλῆν* in Philip. 3. 20. is observed to signifie rather our freedome and prerogative, which we have as Citizens of Jerusalem. Our priviledges are in that spiritual corporation; which indeed doth also by consequence denote, that our lives and conversations ought to be answerable to such glorious advantages.

The second word expressive, is, *In the world.* It is not at one place, or in some company onely, that *Paul* doth thus sincerely behave himself, but in the world, every where, in all places where he cometh, *Locum, non animum*, he may change his place, and his company, but never his godly life.

Whereas then we see, *Paul* gathering his comfort not from some particular actions done at some time, or in some place, but from the whole carriage,



carriage, and constant deportment of himself. We may observe,

*That it is not so much some good actions done at some times, as the universall carriage of our selves in holy things, that doth bring solid comfort.*

It is universal holiness which is the ground of comfort.

This Doctrine is of special use. For who will not be godly? Who may not be thought to belong to the Kingdome of Heaven? If you look upon them, in some fits, while under some dangers, while some sudden pangs are upon them; but God will judge thee, not according to these particulars, but the whole course of thy life. It is true, sometimes thou hast prayed, sometimes thy heart hath been smitten under the guilt of thy sinnes; but how quickly have these passed over again? These are not thy daily exercise: The harmony of thy life is not holy and godly. There are innumerable instances of men, who in some streights and imminent dangers have appeared penitent and reformed, but all hath been forced and compelled, as it were; their constant, habitual inclination was otherwise. Did not Pharaoh in some extremities cry out, *He had sinned*, and desired Moses to pray for him? Did not Ahab under Gods judgements humble himself in sackcloth? Yea was it not the complaint of the Prophets concerning the people of the Israel, *That in their tribulations they did call upon God*? But then afterwards would return to their proper course again, Psalm. 78. 34, 35, 36, 37. *When he slew them, then they sought him, they returned and enquired early after God.* These words declare much activity and sollicitude in them, for a while at least to become reconciled with God: But then what followeth? *They did flatter with their mouth, for their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his Covenant.* And before at vers. 8. they are said, *To be a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.* So that the Israelites are a perpetual instance to confirme this Doctrine, that it is not so much to be regarded how holy and repenting we may appear sometimes, but what we are constantly, that isto be regarded.

To clear this, take notice,

First, That the Scripture speaketh of a two-fold conversation, and the one directly contrary to the other, whose ends also are contrary.

The first of these is, *A wicked, carnal, and natural one*, which all live in, till God by his gracious power deliver us from it. What is every mans conversation till grace change him, but a continual road of evil actions? he goeth from one sinne to another, he is alwayes like himself, as the worm is ever creeping upon the ground, you never see it flying like a bird up to the clouds. This is called *πρώτη ἀναστροφή*, *Our former conversation*, Ephes. 4. 22. *which is corrupt according the deceitfull lusts thereof.* The first conversation then of every one by nature, is that of the old man, original and actual sinnes conjoynd together into one body, as it were; so that he is a masse, or lump of sinne: This is daily corrupted by deceitfull lusts: That as worms are continually eating into the Tree, till they have destroyed it: Thus are lusts constantly breeding in a man, even till they have devoured him. Now, saith the Apostle, *This must be put off*; we must leave this former life, and take up a new one. Oh how few are there that can say, *They have put off their former conversation*! As they were prophane, proud, earthly, so they are still: They cannot say, *It was indeed their former drinking, their former swearing*, but it is their present praying, their present humiliation of themselves: Their latter conversation differeth from the former, as much as the day doth from the night that went before

There is a two-fold conversation, the one natural.



it. This is also called a *vain conversation* received by tradition from our fathers, 1 Pet. 1. 18. It is a *vain one*: for all the life we live, till regenerated, is spent in vain; we attain not to the true and proper end of living. Thy eating, thy drinking, thy buying and selling is all in vain; by none of these things wilt thou please God, and so arrive at last at eternal glory: Yea it were well, if it were only vain missing its end, but it's meritorious of eternal flames in hell. This conversation is said to be *traditional* by our fathers. If the Apostle speak of *Gentiles*, then it is true, that children follow the evil, and ungodly examples of their parents; they will not seem to be better and wiser than they are; if of the *Jews*, which is more probable, then it relateth to those superstitious exercises of Religion, which their fathers added to the command of God. And although they rested and gloried in these, as thereby highly honouring of God, yet all was but a vain worship, a vain Religion. So then a mans evil conversation, is not only to be extended to his vices and sinnes, but also to his religious duties, when either not instituted, or if commanded, yet not performed in that spiritual manner, which the Law of God doth require. So that a mans conversation in his praying, in his coming to Church, in his religious deportments, must be altered, as well as prophane wayes. Thou must leave off thy former way of praying, thy former way of hearing.

The other is  
an heavenly  
and godly  
conversation.

The second kind of conversation mentioned in the Scripture, is, *A godly and an heavenly one*. So that although we live upon the earth, yet our principles, aims, and ends, carry us up to the enjoyment of God. This is called a *good conversation*, Jam. 3. 13. where all divine faith and spiritual wisdom is said to be demonstrated by a *good conversation*. It is not Doctrine, faith, profession, or gifts that men look at, but the conversation, that speaketh a Christian, that speaketh a Minister more than ten thousand excellent discourses; *Plura oculis quam auribus credimus*, said Seneca. So that a good conversation is more demonstrative of godliness, then good gifts, good parts, a good faith. Thy prayers are good, thy conference and discourse is good, is thy conversation also? Hence Paul exhorteth Timothy as a Minister to be a *word*, *An example* (1 Tim. 4. 12.) to believers in word, in conversation. In word, that is, in his Doctrine and preaching. In conversation, that is, in the exercise of all holy duties. So that you see a man is above all things to look to his conversation that it be good. For as this is a special means to edifie and build up others; so none can take comfort from the choicest abilities, the most fervent duties, the purest Church-wayes, unlesse there be a good conversation to uphold him. Hence you see Paul doth not runne to his Apostolical Office, to his great miracles, to the wonderfull revelations and gifts bestowed upon him, but to his conversation in the world, as if that were a greater conviction of all adversaries, then the most glorious Church-prerogatives or priviledges that can be. Hence a godly conversation is a special means to convert others. The Apostle speaketh fully to this concerning godly women, who have Heathen, or wicked, and ungodly husbands, that they should look to their duty, *That they may without the Word be wonne by the conversation of their wives*, while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear, 1 Pet. 3. 1, 2. he saith, *Without the Word*; not but that the Word is the onely ordinary means of conversion; but because their conversation may be an occasion and introductory meanes to bring them to the Word. As Austin said, He should not have believed the Scriptures, but for the Church, because that was the introductory motive, though the Scriptures themselves were the cause of his faith. By this we see how much regard we are to have to our conversation, for by it many may be converted, or be subverted. What a wofull thing will it



it be, if thou by thy life hast given a just occasion to drive men off from godlinesse; They were coming on, but thy conversation drove them back. It is true, when wicked men doe wickedly from their owne corrupt hearts, take an occasion to be offended at Gods wayes, as some did when they heard Christ preach, saying, *It was an hard saying, who can bear it?* And from thence took an occasion never to follow Christ more, *John 6.60.* then the guilt of such men lieth at their owne doore; They are offended where there is no just cause; it's *Scandalum acceptum*, not *datum*. But if thou doest by any sinfull and unwarrantable practises alienate men from Religion, make them think the worse of godlinesse for thy doings, then remember that dreadfull sentence of our Saviour, *Woe be to that man by whom offences come*, *Matth. 18.7.* This is likewise called, *αἰσχυνὴ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναγε-  
λῶν*, *Your good conversation in Christ*. A Scripture-conversation is a *con-  
versation in Christ*, that is partly by the rule and guidance of Christ. We live not according to the course of the world; not according to the lusts of men, but as Christ hath commanded, so we live; and then partly, because by Christ's blood we do obtain this life, he hath redeemed us from our former evil wayes, he hath purchased a liberty for us: and then partly, because our life is terminated in Christ, and we doe objectively propound him in all our wayes, as Paul saith, *Galat. 2. 20. I live, yet not I; but Christ liveth in me*; Christ is the principle or authour, Christ is the means and way, Christ is the finisher and end of this life.

In the next place, let us consider, *What goeth to make a mans conversation godly*, that we may say, it is not some sudden motions, or transitory workings, but his conversation that is according to the Gospel. For if some particular good actions at some times were enough to make a man godly, then the way to Heaven would be no longer a narrow, but a broad way. Now in this description you must not expect a metaphysical or punctual decision, of how many actions goe to make a mans conversation: So that if he come up to such a number, yet if he want one more, then it cannot be called his conversation: but we must understand it morally and in a large sense. Briefly therefore to a mans conversation there is required as the foundation of all.

First, *A principle of regeneration, to be made a new creature*. There must be spiritual life, before there can be spiritual motions and actions. So that if men are brought sometimes to what is holy, by external motives, because they have godly parents, godly Magistrates, godly Governours, as *Joash* all the while *Jehoiada* the Priest, and his Uncle lived: This cannot be called a mans conversation; there is not a new nature within, but outward motives prevail with him, and thereupon as they ebb or flow, so is there a variation and change in his practices.

Secondly, *There must be a predominancy in his heart and affections to what is holy*. Christ must be his treasure, he must love him more than any thing in the world, then father, or mother, or life it self. For if the soul be not thus principally fixed on him, when that which is dearer, and more loved, doth suggest it self, then they leave Christ. This is plainly seene, *Matth. 13.* in those hearers who believed for a while, and brought forth some fruit, but then when persecutions did arise they fell off, then these seeming vines became thorns.

Thirdly, *There must be an actual improvement of those habitual principles of grace that are within*. For though a man have never so much grace within, yet if it be not improved by outward exercise, we cannot call it a godly conversation: and therefore it is a vain thing for men to appeale to the goodnesse of their heart, and their good meanings; for the conversation

What is required to a good conversation.

1. Principles of grace.

2. A predominancy in the heart to Christ.

3. Actual improvements of grace.



tion is more to be believed than all these. There must then be these streames as well as the fountain; we must shew our faith (as you heard) by a godly conversation; so that this relateth most to the exercise of grace, though it presuppose the fountain and root within.

4. Pure and heavenly motives.

Lastly, To our conversation, *There are required pure and heavenly motives, that we do holy duties for holiness sake*; That we follow Christ for Christs sake, not for loaves. The old Rule is, *A quatenus ad omne valet consequentia*; He that doth a godly duty, because godly, will do all godly duties. As the fire, because it burneth naturally, it burneth in one country as well as another: Thus a Christian, because carried out purely and naturally (as it were) to the things of God, doth own them every where, in all places, in all companies. That which is godliness at one place, and in one company, is godliness in another. Onely we must necessarily take along one Caution, lest we condemn all the generation of the godly for hypocrites. *A mans conversation is godly, though in many things he faileth by common infirmities*, though in all things he cometh short of that perfection which is required of him: Yea, though for a season through prevailing temptations he fall into, and lie in some grievous finnes. *David's conversation may be called godly*, he was a man after Gods own heart. And *Peter's conversation may be godly*, though he had such a foul fall: So that infirmities, yea sometimes grosse finnes fallen into through urging temptations, cannot be said to make a mans conversation wicked, when the general inclination of the soul is set for that which is good. It is true, he that doth customarily and habitually sinne, he is not borne of God; neither can a regenerate man sinne so, as the Apostle speaketh, *1 Ioh. 3. 9*. Every swoon or fainting is not death, yet such having the seed of grace within, will as Trees that seemed to be dead all winter, because there is life in the root, at last revive and flourish when the spring of Gods grace shall draw it forth. This is necessary, lest the Doctrine of a godly conversation seem onely an *Idea*, like *Tullies Oratour*, and that it cannot be found any where in the world.

Whose conversation is not holy notwithstanding some good things in it.

In the last place, let us see what profitable Uses may be drawn from this truth. And

First, *Of Instruction*, who are to informe themselves, their conversation is not holy, notwithstanding some good things may sometimes be found in their lives. And

1. *Such who in fear of death onely, and in times of sad dangers doe call upon the Lord, and cry out of their finnes*. Is this your conversation? Doe ye ever thus, but in some times of exigency? It is greatly disputed, Whether a death-bed repentance can ever be sincere? The *Socinians* are too rigid, denying the salvation of such persons, because they have no time to shew forth good works in their conversation. But as this may be too rigid, so on the other side, *Austin*, and others put it greatly to the doubt, *Non dico damnabitur, sed nec dico salvabitur*, then is the conversation holy, when in all conditions, rich or poor, sick or well, living or dying, thou doest diligently seek the face of God.

2. *Such cannot plead for an holy conversation in the world, Who are onely such in some companies, and in some places*. Many of the Nations became *Jewes* for fear of them. Thus if thou because the company thou art with is religious, or in the place where thou livest, godliness is owned with credit, then thou wilt also doe as they doe, talke as they talk: This is not thy conversation. *Paul* was godly in all the places of the world, even at *Rome*, and where he was in the greatest danger. *Lot* was righteous in wicked *Sodome*. It is not with a godly man, as they say of some Trees, in one



one Countrey they bring pleasant and wholesome fruit, but if transplanted into another soil poisonous and destructive: So he in some places speaketh for godlinesse, and in other places to laugh and deride it. This is not thy conversation.

3. Neither can such pretend to a godly conversation, *Who onely with Herod doe sometimes gladly, or with Saul obey in some things, but rebell in other.* If it were godlinesse for godlinesse sake, then thou wouldst zealously set upon all the duties of godlinesse, great as well as little, self-denying, as well as more gratefull and pleasing. Yea the more godlinesse, still the more desire and delight after it. If a drop be so precious, what would more plentiful drinkings of it? By what reason I am godly thus farre, I am bound to proceed further.

In the next place, let it be an *Use of Exhortation*, to look to godlinesse in your conversation; it lieth there as well as in your hearts, in duties, in professions. By this the Gospel is adorned, by this Religion is honoured, by this many others may be brought home to God, and glorifie him for beholding thy pure, holy and unblameable conversation. It is a signe grace hath deep rooting in thy heart and affections, when it's made palpable and visible in operations: It's by these fruits that we must judge of trees. The hypocrite would be applauded as much as the godly. Gifts and parts would be exalted, as grace, were not our conversations to be the true touchstone herein; but above all things look to the purity of thy intentions in thy whole life, that alone maketh regular and uniforme; without this thou wilt cry *Hosanna* to Christ at one time, and *crucifie him* another. It's observable, that though a multitude did leave their own Towns and houses, outwardly shewing much affection towards him, yet our Saviour chargeth them with carnal motives in all that they did, *Iohn 6.26.* *Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seeke me not, because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were satisfied. Verily, verily* This sacred asseveration Christ useth in matters of high concernment; and here it is, because the *Capernaïtes* did not perceive this carnal frame in themselves, therefore doth he expresse it the more vehemently. Thus *Austin* complained in his time, *Vix queritur Iesus propter Iesum*, Jesus is scarcely sought for Jesus sake. So difficult is it to be sincere in our conversation.





## S E R M, XCVIII.

*Of Gods Presence with the Ministry, how it renders the People inexcusable.*

2 C O R. I. 12.

*And more abundantly to you-wards.*

**W**E are now arrived at the close and last particular of this verse, wherein is contained the ground of *Paul's* comfort, from the testimony of his conscience. As the former particulars did declare his conversation, with the manner of it, universally without restriction or limitation to times, persons, or places, so this last clause is added to affect the *Corinthians* the more, who listened too much to false Apostles, from his peculiar conversation to them, it was more abundantly towards them, then to any other in the world. Not that *Paul* was lesse sincere, or lesse faithfull in other places; but only there were more outward effects and demonstrations of it towards them, then to others. So that the Greek word *ἐκπορεύομαι*, doth denote the abundance and overflowing evidences of the power of God in his Ministry towards them. And this comparative may be taken both intensively, his carriage towards them was fuller of love and compassion, fuller of care and diligence to them then others, because they were in greater danger, and under more temptations. As also extensively, there he had laboured more, continued longer, and the power of God had been more successfull in his Ministry amongst them. In the Greek it is *ἐν ὑμῖν*, which some render amongst you; for *ἐν ὑμῖν*, as *Beza* sheweth the phrase used so out of *Demosthenes*. Others render it towards you, for *ἐν ὑμῖν*, and so the Apostle hath this expression, 2 Cor. 2. 4. *That ye might know the love which I have more abundantly towards you.* The like is also applied to *Titus*, in reference to them, his inward affection was more abundantly towards them, 2 Cor. 7. 15. If you ask, Wherein this greater abundance of *Paul's* sincere conversation was seen to the *Corinthians*, more than to others? Expositors give in several particulars. *Chrysostome*, and others following him, make it to be in this, that he preached the Gospel freely to them. Here saith he, *ἐκπορεύομαι ὑμῖν*, He went beyond his bounds, condescending to their infirmity. Now concerning this fact of *Paul's* receiving no maintenance from these *Corinthians*, though he did from others; and pleaderth he might also by right take off them, alledging the plain Ordinance and Institution of Christ, 1 Cor. 9. 13. *Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel.* There is a two-fold controversie, the former is started by the Papists, who from hence held the Doctrine of Counsels, as also of supererogation, that a man may do more than he is commanded, as they say *Paul* did in this case. The later is from others, who from hence decry the maintenance of Ministers, and that they are with *Paul* to continue in some vocation, to maintain themselves and family with; but because here it is supposed only, and after-

wards



wards in the Epiſtle it is professedly owned by the Apoſtle, and inſiſted upon, we ſhall reſerre it, till God give opportunity to conſider it in its proper place. 2 Cor. 11. 7, 8, 9. Others they underſtand this *greater abundance* in reſpect of the length of that time, he continued amongſt them. For ye may read that *Act. 18. 10, 11. Paul continued there a year and an half at Corinth*, which was a great ſpace of time, conſidering how his Apoſtolical Office required of him the viſiting of other Churches, and planting alſo the Goſpel, where yet it was not received. They had therefore time enough to ſee his whole deportment, to obſerve that he was no fraudulent impoſtor, that he did all things for their own good, not ſeeking himſelf. 3. Some reſerre it to the *great ſucceſſe* and wonderfull power, that God did put forth in, and with his Miniſtry; for ſo God telleth him that viſion he had there, *Act. 18. 9, 10, Be not afraid Paul, for I am with thee, no man ſhall hurt thee; for I have much people in this City.* So that this was a great conviction that *Pauls* Miniſtry ſhould work ſuch a mighty charge among a people ſo proud, ſo rich, ſo glorying in parts and humane learning, as they did: This was the hand of God. Laſtly, It may reſerre to his *love towards them*, which he ſeemeth to expreſſe to them more than others, and therefore ſpeaketh of it, 2 Cor. 2. 4. yea he reproveth them for their ingratitude herein, 2 Cor. 12. 15. *I will very gladly be ſpent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the leſſe I be loved.* Now the reaſon why *Paul* was thus affectionately carried out towards them more than others, was becauſe of the dangerous temptations they were in by falſe Apoſtles; theſe came with enticing words, pretending much love, and alſo obſerved ſtrictly every paſſage of *Pauls* life; ſo that it behoved him, as to walk with more circumſpection, ſo alſo to expreſſe his hearty love towards them, ſeeing they were in ſuch a weak and uncertain condition. Even as *Ariſtotle* obſerveth, The affections of parents are moſt carried to thoſe who are the weakeſt, and moſt infirme. And thus much for explication. From the words we obſerve,

*That the more evidences and demonſtrations a people have had of Gods preſence with the Miniſtry, the more inexcusable will they be, if they do not profit thereby.*

The longer you have enjoyed the meanes of grace, and the more powerfully God hath maniſeſted his preſence therein: If ſtill thou perſiſt in thy rebellion and oppoſition to God, the greater will thy condemnation be. The Apoſtle doth much preſſe this upon the *Corinthians*, as a ſpecial means to preſerve them from revolting, 2 Corinth. 13. *Since ye ſeek a prooſe of Chriſt ſpeaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but mighty in you; and thereupon biddeth them, Examine themſelves, whether they be in the faith, or whether Chriſt be in them, or not.* And if ſo, they muſt needs acknowledge this to be the fruit of his Miniſtry. Oh it is an high aggravation of a mans wilfulneſſe to ſinne, when he cannot but be convinced, that the Miniſter doth his duty; he diſchargeth his Office, he hath informed me fully of my dangerous eſtate, yet for all that he will go on in diſobedience! We read of the Apoſtles preſſing this likewise, 1 Corinth. 4. 15. with much earneſtneſſe, *Though you have ten thouſand inſtructors in Chriſt, yet have ye not many fathers.* He was the firſt that through the grace of God, begot them a new from their former impieties. So that the more good a people have received by a Miniſter, the more they ſtand obliged ſtill to follow his Doctrine. Our Apoſtle dealeth in this Argument alſo with the *Galatians*, Chap. 3. 2, 3, 4. *This would I learne of you, received ye the Spirit by the workes of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?* He ap-

M m m

The more evidently Gods preſence hath been with the Miniſtry, the more inexcusable is the unprofitableneſſe of the people under it.

pealeth



pealeth to what they had found experimentally by the preaching of the Gospel upon their owne soules: and would they who had thus begunne in the spirit, end in the flesh? Our Saviour also telleth the *Jewes* concerning *John*, *They did once rejoyce in his light for a season*, John 5. 35. At the first, while his preaching and life was new, before he came throughly to convince them of their hypocrisie and wickednesse; and then when they saw his preaching was against them, and that he was not a man for their carnal interest; they who once rejoyced in him afterwards reproached him, and said, *He had a Devil.*

But let us amplifie this point in several particulars.

1. The longer time a people have enjoyed the means of grace, they'll be more inexcusable, if they answer not Gods expectations.

First, *The longer time a people have enjoyed a faithfull Ministry, the more inexcusable will they be, if they answer not Gods expectation.* A great part of the world sitteth in darknesse, and have nothing of this spiritual light arising upon them; They have had no Prophet amongst them, to warne and admonish every man to forsake his evil way. If therefore God hath fixed Pastours and Teachers amongst us, who continually informe us of our duties: How great will our condemnation be, if we shut our eyes against light? Though thou dost not account the yeares, yet God doth; he taketh notice of the precise time, that he hath been calling and inviting of thee, to come in, and submit unto him. We see this notably in that Parable, *Luke 13. 7. Then said the Master to his Vine-dresser, Behold these three yeares I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and finde none.* It is but three yeares, and yet this is accounted a great matter; their unprofitablenesse, though they had but three yeares trial was so hainous, that there is a command to cut down the tree, as that which cumbereth the ground. What cause then hast thou to fear lest such a sentence passe upon thee, who hast not onely for three yeares, but many threes been dressed and pruned, and yet continuest barren? How should you number every Lords-day? How should you account and set downe every Sermon? For though you let them passe, yet God will not. Thus we have God complaining concerning the people of *Israel*, mentioning the exact time, they had been froward and rebellious against him under his gracious dispensations, *Psal. 95. 10.* which is also alledged by the Apostle, *Hebr. 3. 9, 17. They saw Gods workes forty yeares in the wilderness.* What a long time was here to convince them, to humble them under all these wonderfull workes which God did before their eyes, yet God complaineth, that these *forty yeares*, they did only grieve God by their sinnes and provocations? And is not this the sad case of too many? May not God say forty, yea fifty and threescore yeares; Ye have grieved him every Sabbath-day, because not reformed or changed by the Word? Remember this therefore, the longer that the Ministers of God have continued with you, the more is all excuse taken off from you, if ye repent not.

2. The more faithfull the Minister is, the more in excusable will the people be.

Secondly, *The more faithfull and diligent the Ministers of God have been by publick preaching and otherwayes, to convert you from all your evil doings, the greater will your account be, if ye be negligent about your soules.* Indeed people may have a Ministry, but because a lazy corrupt one, because a superstitious or prophane one; men are encouraged more thereby in their wickednesse. And although this will not free a people, they shall not think to escape by laying the fault upon their blinde guides; for rather than their bodies should starve, they would break thorow stony walls, and goe farre before they would be famished: So if people were sensible of their soules undoing by such a Ministry; if they lived where the famine of the Word is, they would wander from sea to sea; and from the North even to the East, to look the word of God, as you have it,



*Amos, Chap. 8. 12.* Though I say, the people will not be acquitted, they shall die and be damned in their sinnes; yet God will require their blood of such *Idol-shepherds*, *Ezek. 23. 8, 9.* But as it followeth there, *If they be faithfull shepherds, if they doe warne every wicked man, and yet they will goe on in their evil way,* then such faithfull Ministers have delivered their owne soules, and the peoples blood will lie upon their owne head. The more paines then, and the greater labour that the Ministers of God have taken to reduce men from their evil wayes, and yet thou continuest unreformed, the greater will thy confusion be: Their study, their Sermons, their prayers, their sweat, their wearinesse, will all witness against thee at that day. We may see this notably fulfilled in Christ himself, that great shepherd of our souls, *Matth. 11. 20.* It is there said, *Then began he to upbraid those Cities, wherein most of his mighty workes were done, because they repented not. Woe to thee Corazin, woe to thee Bethsaida, &c. And thou Capernaum which art exalted unto Heaven.*—By this we see, the more abundantly Christ had discovered his willingness for their salvation, and they refused him, the greater woe did belong to them; yea it would be worse with them at the Day of Judgement, than the *Sodomites*, the vilest of men, whom God destroyed with such a sudden and terrible destruction.

Thirdly, *The more successe that the Ministry hath had, where thou livest, the greater change and conversion it hath made, and yet thou continue the same prophane person thou wast, the greater is thy guilt.* When it shall be a converting Word to others, but not to thee; an enlightning Word to others, but not to thee: Oh do thou tremble under thy condition, lest God hath given thee up to a spiritual judgment, that no preaching, no Ministry, no, if Angels should come from Heaven, or men raised from the dead, yet they should do no good upon thee. If there be but one man, or woman in a Parish, that can blesse God for the good their soules have got by the hearing of the Word; this person will arise at the Day of Judgement against thee, then God will say, Why was it not a converting Word to thee, as well as him? Why did thy neighbours heare and tremble, reforme and tremble, but thou didst not?

3. Where the Ministry is more successful, the impenitent are more inexcusable.

Now the successe of a faithfull Ministry may be seen in these particulars.

1. *To enlighten thee, to instruct and teach thee in the wayes of God.* For this end they are called *Lights* and *Teachers*. Observe then, if there be not many that have got knowledge in the truths of God, when thou art ignorant how many by thee do know the principles of Religion; the Ministry hath been instrumental to awaken them: so that those who were ignorant do now understand: this will condemn thee, who livest in thy sottish ignorance.

Wherein the successe of a faithfull Ministry is seen.

2. The successe of the Ministry is seen, *In the conversion and reforming of men from their evil wayes.* To turn swine into sheep, weeds into flowers, as we read of three thousand converted by one Sermon that *Peter* made. If then, God hath blessed our labours in this kind, though it should be but to one man in the Congregation, this will be a testimony against you. Was not he once prophane, as thou art? Did not he follow all excesse of riot, as thou doest? Did not he deride and scorn at the power of godliness, as thou doest? but now he is wholly altered, now he dare not do the things he once did: Now he crieth out, Oh such a Sermon struck to my very heart, such a passage was like a thunder-bolt! Why then is it that thou doest not follow such a man, and do as he doth? He would not be the same worldling, the same prophane person he was once for a world. Oh remember this mans conversion, this mans change will be a testimony against thee!



3. The successe of the Ministry is not only to give *spiritual life at first, but to quicken up, to edifie and to cause to grow up more and more in godlinesse*; that you may not be a people alwayes in low principles, that you may not be babes alwayes, but be more spiritual, and greater proficientes in godliness than formerly. Thus our Saviour prayed, *Joh. 17.* for the Disciples already converted, that they might be more sanctified. And here again is condemning matter to those who stand at a stay; yea it may be go back, and fall off from their first love. Oh lay this to heart! Seest thou not how such and such, that did but lately look towards Heaven, have overgone thee? they have more knowledge, more grace, more life and vigour than thou hast. Certainly this maketh thy case the sadder; they are planted by the same waters thou art, hear the same Sermons, receive the same Ordinances, and yet are farre more fruitfull than thou art.

4. Another particular wherein the successfull efficacy of the Ministry doth appear, is, *To antidote against errors, to preserve from giddinesse and wantonnesse in matters of Religion.* This great effect of the Ministry the Apostle taketh notice of, *Ephes. 4. 14.* where it is said, *God gave gifts to men, Apostles and Pastors to his Church, that henceforth we be no more children, tossed up and down with every wind of doctrine.* This implieth, that before the Ministry came, they were tossed up and down; but now it must be no more so. This also will speak terrible guilt to some, who are fallen off from the wholesome truths of God, who have left their own stedfastness, being carried away with the error of the wicked. For those who have been preserved and confirmed by the Ministry, will be a testimony against such Apostates.

Lastly, The word of God preached, though it may not thoroughly reforme, yet it doth sometimes *restrain men from sinne.* Sometimes it maketh them with *Felix tremble*; at other times with *Agrippa, almost to become a Christian.* Oh let such remember those times! You have felt the word of God like fire in your bowels; you have found it to be like a two-edged sword within. Know that all those relentings and troubled agonies of soul, will be a condemnation one day. The Word preached hath more abundantly worked upon you than others, though it hath not yet obtained a full and perfect change upon thee. Thus you see, wheresoever the word of God hath appeared more abundantly in any one particular in that respect, the greater is the aggravation of those mens sins, who have not thereby been reformed.

Let us proceed to the Uses. And

1. This may aggravate the sinne of all those who are now departed from the Ministry and the Ordinances, who are so arrogantly puffed up with a supposed perfection, that they think they need not either hear or pray, as if all fulness did dwell in them. Now to these men we propound this Question, *How came you at first to that light, so that knowledge you have? How came you at first out of your prophanessee? Whence was it that your consciences were awakened once? Was not all this at first by the Ministry? If there be any good in you, did you not receive it from these streams of God? Why then is it that you depart from us? Why is it that you despise what once you imbraced?* Certainly our Ministry hath had more of Gods power and presence to you-wards, then to many ignorant prophane persons: but this maketh your sin greater.

Use 2. *To instruct us, how inexcusable all they are, who live now under Gospel-light, and yet are not reclaimed from their evil wayes.* For though one particular Ministry may have more of life and power than another, yet wheresoever Christ is faithfully preached, there is the strongest argument that can be used to bring you to God. All that do now refuse us preaching, refuse Christ speaking from Heaven, as the Apostle argueth, *Heb. 12. 25.* This is more than to refuse Moses, or the Prophets, yea then Angels, as *Heb. 2. 3.* And therefore the



the Apostle propoundeth this Question, *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and afterwards was confirmed by others, God bearing them witnesse by signes and many wonders?* So that now the things of Religion cannot be more abundantly confirmed to you than they are; you are not to expect more powerfull means to convert you, than have been used; and this will make Hell seven times hotter for all ungodly and prophane persons, who are so under these Gospel-dispensations.



## S E R M. XCIX.

### *Of the convincing Nature of Godlineß in Ministers, and private Christians.*

2 COR. I. 13.

*For we write no other things unto you, then what you read or acknowledge, and I trust that you shall acknowledge even to the end.*

**T**He Apostle having formerly asserted the sincerity and holy simplicity of his conversation, and that more abundantly to the *Corinthians*; lest this should be a vain boasting of himself, and that in giving testimony of himself, that would not be valid, or sufficient: He doth in this verse appeal to the very consciences of the *Corinthians* likewise. So that not only the testimony of his own conscience, but of their consciences also, must needs justify him. And indeed this is a good demonstration of that uprightness which is within us, when we can appeal to the consciences of others. For although men, especially such as are prejudiced and alienated from us, may suffocate and smother as much as lie in them, that they have any such convictions of our integrity, yet secretly their consciences cannot but bear witness to us. The matter then wherein he doth appeal, as it were, to their own consciences, is set down in the beginning of the verse, *For we write no other things unto you, &c.* There is one expression in this passage, that hath much perplexed Interpreters, and made them go different wayes; it is, that *we write no other things unto you, then what you do, ἀγαπᾶτε, read*; so we translate it, and likewise many others. Now this is wondered at by some, yea by Calvin accounted, *Nimis frigidum, ne dicam ineptum*, saith he, *in loc.* It is too frigid and absurd, to make this the sense, *I write to you no other things, then what you read, &c.* For who doubted of that? And how could any man read otherwise than he wrote, saith *Musculus*? *Estius* also doth confess, that the rendring the word ἀγαπᾶτε, *Ye read*, did cause great perplexity to Expositors; and therefore sheweth, that *Theophylact*, when he could not satisfie himself about that sense of the word, did runne to another. Yet there are learned men, that endeavour to make a good sense of it, though it be translated [*Ye read:*] For *Beza*, though he taketh notice of what Calvin saith against it, yet followeth this translation, and would make this *Paul's* meaning, *That he did not write cunningly, artificially what they did read*



in the plain letter of the words that he did write, he had no equivocations, nor intended any delusions by his words. Cajetan in loc. he maketh this expression to referre to the former Epistle, and also to this part of the second which we are now upon, *We write no more now, then what ye have read formerly*. Therefore some render it in the preterperfect tense. Others they make the general sense to be this, *Our words, and our actions do agree, we write no more than what may be read, and acknowledged by all*. Though these interpretations may passe very well; yet because the expression is not so full and proper to say, *We write no other things, then what you read*, I shall rather go with those, who say, the word *ἀναγινώσκω*, though it many times signifieth *to read*, yet it doth also, *to take notice of, to know, to remember, &c.* Indeed I find it not in this sense used in the New Testament, but constantly for *to read*; yet Varinus, he maketh it to signifie as well *ἀναγινώσκω, ἀναμνησκώ*, *To know, to call to mind, to remember, to be convinced of a thing*. So that the meaning is, *We write to you no other things, then what you know, what you remember, yea what ye are experimentally convinced of*. And thus it differeth from the word *ἐμπνεύματα*, which followeth, and signifieth more. For a man may know, and remember, yea and be convinced of many things, which yet through some corruption within, he will not acknowledge: for that is, when we do with a ready and willing consent approve and own such a thing. The Pharisees were often convinced about Christs Doctrine, yet they would not acknowledge it. But the Apostle attributeth both these to the Corinthians: for the *ἡ γὰρ*, rendered [Or] Erasmus suspects it crept in for *ἃ, which things*. Vorstius preferreth that reading, which is *τι γὰρ*, and so paraphraseth, *If so be you do acknowledge*; but there is no necessity of this.

From the words thus explained, we observe,

A godly convincing life is of great advantage, specially in a Minister.

*That a godly convincing life in a Christian, especially in a Minister, is of special advantage for many excellent effects.*

Every Christian, and much more every Minister, are by their lives and examples so to convince, that others may acknowledge, verily God is with them, verily the Spirit of Christ dwelleth in them. This is no more, then what our Saviour expresseth, *Let your light so shine before men, Mat. 5. 16. that they may see your good works, and glorifie your Father which is in Heaven*. Some make this exhortation given to Christians in the general: Others to the Ministers of the Gospel in particular. However by this we see, that God cannot bear meer titles, names and opinions, unlesse there be an holy life accompanying of them; he saith, *That they may see your good works*, not titles, not professions, not your ceremonies, and instituted worship, but good works; good works then are necessary; but such as flow from men enlightened by the Gospel-truth. Many mistake about good works, not knowing what the nature of them is; and then Christ sheweth the end of these good works, *That they may glorifie your Father which is in Heaven*; not that they may glorifie you, and honour you. We are not to do good things for applause and esteem; neither doth he say, that ye may merit a reward in Heaven. Vain-glory and merit, with self-confidence, are the end why pharisaical men cause their light to shine before others; but the Evangelical Christian, he doth it, *That God may be glorified*.

But let us cause the light of this Doctrine also to shine before you. And

1. Godlinesse hath a convincing and converting effect with it.

First, We are to know, *That godlinesse and exact holinesse hath a convincing and converting effect with it*. The sincere practice of it doth awe and conquer the conscience, even of the vilest men. Godliness is the image of God. Now when God created man, in that he gave him dominion over all the beasts of the field, they stood in awe of him: And thus where the image of God is repaired, there it hath a convincing work upon the conscience of the most beastly men.

Thus



Thus it is said of *Herod*, though a King, who had command over *John Baptist's* life, as the event shewed, yet he feared *John*, because he was a just man, *Mark* 6. 20. As the lustre of the sunne-beams do dazle the Owls and the Bats eyes: Thus doth the lively expression of holiness even amaze the most profligate sinners; neither is this the lesse true; though wicked men rage, blaspheme and raise all manner of calumnies against such who walk uprightly, for in the midst of this madness their conscience is still awed and convinced. So that this doth discover the excellency of a godly life, that it breedeth a reverential awe, it maketh the consciences of men secretly to own such, and to wish that they were as such, and that their latter end might be like theirs.

Secondly, *Although a godly life be thus necessary in every Christian, and especially in a Minister, yet the efficacy of the Ministry, and sacramental administrations, doth not depend upon the holy life of a Minister, no more than the Papists say, it doth upon a Ministers intention.* This was a *Donatistical* error of old, so much opposed by *Austin*, that the wickedness of a Ministers life, did frustrate the work of the Sacraments. Certainly Christs promise is made to the Office, and to the right administration of the Ordinances; neither can the evil life of the Minister make void Gods promise of presence to his own Ordinances, where people come in a prepared and holy manner. This our Saviour seemeth fully to confirm, *Mat.* 23. 23. where he directed his hearers, *To hear the Pharisees and Scribes, because sitting in Moses his chair, and to observe what those teachers should bid them observe and do;* but (saith he) *do not after their works, for they say, and do not.* This Text doth confute two sorts of men; first, Those of the *Romane* party, who make use of this against the Protestants, as if it were their sinne to depart from their Bishops and Pastors, though it be granted they super-added many superstitious and corrupt doctrines, which we would easily yeeld unto: if as the *Pharisees* sate in *Moses his chair*; so they did in Christs chair. For this phrase denoteth two things: 1. *A lawfull Call and Office.* 2. *True and sound Doctrine*; our Saviour did not mean they were to do every thing the *Pharisees* said. For at another time he bid them, *Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees*, which was their doctrine, *Mat.* 16. 6. But his universal expression is to be limited to the subject matter, while they did teach what *Moses* commanded. But we deny that the *Roman Bishops* have Christs chair, either in respect of their Office, or their doctrine. Again the second error which this Text doth confute, is the extremity of those, who because of some corruption in the Ministers, do wholly cry down the Ministry it self, or out of their opposition to what is bad, will not receive that which is wholesome and good. Our Saviour being to reprove the *Pharisees* in a most sharp way, as hypocrites and blind guides, knowing how apt people are to runne from one extremity to another, doth therefore advise them, that so farre as they keep to *Moses his doctrine*, so farre they are to be attended unto, though by their ill lives they destroy all. Thus hungry men will eat the meat provided for them at the feast, not considering whether the Masters of the feast do eat or no: Yea though they do not, yet they will not forbear; or as *Chrysostom*, Men that dig for gold, will gladly take their fulness of that, although the ground that yeeldeth it, be barren and unfruitfull in respect of grasse and flowers: But I cannot say all that is to be said on this point. Therefore

In the third place, *Though the efficacy of Ordinances dependeth not upon the godliness of him that doth administer, yet all such dispensers can have no comfort from God; neither may they expect acceptance from him, while they live in their iniquities.* *Mat.* 7. 22. *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name, and in thy Name cast out Devils? Yet you read of that terrible denunciation towards them, Depart from me, I know ye not.* It is a very sad thing to consider how much Christians will rest on titles and names, vpon Ordinances

2. The efficacy of the Ministry depends not upon the piety of the Minister.

3. Yet such Ministers as are not godly, cannot expect comfort from God, nor acceptance with him.



nances and external duties, thinking these will carry them to Heaven, though otherwise full of impiety. The Apostle *James* argueth against this position that *faith without a holy conversation will save*, as if it were a Doctrine plausibly received. Certainly in *Austin's* time it was so universally entertained, that a right faith would save, though separated from a godly life, that he doth warily, though sincerely set himself against it. As it is thus with Christians, so also with Ministers and Officers of the Church, how apt are they to be confident, and to be puffed up, because if they have a true Call, Church-government and Order according to Christ's Institution? not so diligently attending to the strict and holy practice of godliness, as they ought to do. The Apostle speaketh notably to this point, *1 Cor. 5. 6, 7.* where he taxeth them for their boasting in many Church-privileges, when impiety was not censured amongst them, *Your glorifying is not good*; They gloried in their teachers, they magnified their abilities and gifts, but saith the Apostle, *This is not good*: All this is vanity as long as wicked men are suffered amongst you. So that you see, neither parts or gifts, nor divine Institutions and Officers in the Church of God, without godly and holy lives are matter of any true and solid comfort. Therefore we cannot passe by that serious and holy observation which *Musculus* hath upon this passage of *Paul's* encouraging himself, not from his Apostolical office, not from his miraculous and extraordinary gifts, but his sincere conversation. The Catholical corruption of the Church came in, when this pestilence had infected the Officers of the Church, that they did not think it so much material, how they had their conversation in the world, so that they kept faithfull to the *Roman Sea*. And would to God (as he goeth on) *these vanities did not prevail in those Churches, which are freed from Antichristianism*; and this poisonous root (saith he) is not a little watered of those, who cannot speak of the dispensation of the mysteries of God, unlesse they often inculcate, that it is not so material how the Minister liveth, so that Christ's Institutions are exactly observed. Thus he, adding more also to this point. This is enough to shew, That the Reformed Churches are not to rest upon their Reformed Doctrine, Reformed Discipline, unlesse also the lives of all in their respective places be commensurated to the rule of God.

4. A godly life is convincing, either potentially or actually.

In the fourth place, *When we speak of a convincing holy life, that may be understood two wayes*, either, 1. *Potentially*, such as is apt to convince, and of its own nature tendeth thereunto. Or, 2. *Actually and eventually*, which doth so convince, as that it draweth out an acknowledgement, when they do ἀναγινώσκουσιν and ὁμολογῶσιν. This distinction is to be observed; for the former many times is without the later. Even as the Sun is in it self most visible, and yet to a blind man it doth not enlighten him: so it many times falleth out, that godly Ministers and godly Christians do live convincing lives; so that they will be a testimony at the day of judgement against all impenitent sinners, and yet the world will not acknowledge this. It is plain in Christ; whose life could be every way way more convincing than his? What sinne could they charge upon him? He was not even as the best Ministers of God are, so subject to infirmities, to rashnes, to passions, to worldliness, or any other evil; and yet for all that his Ministry and life did not so actually convince many of his hearers, as that they did acknowledge him to be the Sonne of God, the true *Messias*, and Saviour of the world. Some indeed did acknowledge him, but the *Pharisees* and *Sadduces*, these said, *He was an impostor, a blasphemor*, and therefore they put him to death, as judging him a false Prophet. Thus you see that there may be a convincing life, and yet for all that men will be obstinate and malicious, hardening themselves against the duties required of them.

What are the causes that make godly lives oft not convincing.

Now it is good to take notice of some of those causes that keep men from being convinced that such Ministers, or such people walk in the wayes of the Lord, and therefore we are to walk in their steps: As

1. Preju-



1. *Prejudice and prepossession principles already received, whereby we stop the ear like the Adder, and will not hear the voice of the best charmer and wisest.* Thus it was with many of the Jews, they had a tradition that no good, no Prophet could arise out of Galilee; They expected a *Messias* that in a temporal pompous manner should deliver them from all external bondage, and therefore they would not be convinced by anything that Christ did, or said.

1. Prejudice.

2. *Corrupt and earthly affections, when our hearts are set upon any worldly or self-interest;* This will keep us from being convinced, though Angels should come and preach to us. Thus the Pharisees they were moved by self-respects, if they should yield to Christ, their applause, their gain would quickly perish. And no doubt such clay as this lieth upon the eyes of many men, that seeing, they do not see; knowing, they will not be convinced.

2. Corrupt affections.

3. *Mistake about the nature and way of godliness, may keep many off from being convinced.* I shall instance only in two principles.

3. Mistake about the way and nature of godliness.

1. When men do judge nothing *Godliness*, but what is exactly perfect: And therefore if they see Ministers or Christians subject to any infirmities, this hardens them in their impieties, they see such men have failings. If this were a good principle, no godly man in the world (except Christ, in whom all fulness dwelt) had a convincing life. Was there any Prophet, or an Apostle that had not some failings, that did not pray for the pardon of sinne; *If we say we have no sinne (saith John in the name of the most holy) we deceive our selves, and have no truth in us,* 1 Joh. 1. 8.

2. Another false principle that keepeth from convincing, is, *When we think godliness lieth in the actual abdication and renouncing of all earthly, worldly things.* It is true, in our afflictions we are to have these things, as if we had them not. There is to be an habitual preparation of heart, to leave all, when Christ shall command. It is true, *We cannot serve God and Mammon;* the love of the Father, and the love of the world cannot consist together; but the love of God, and the use and possession of these things may. Now by this error many Papists are not convinced of the holiness that is in reformed Churches. Why so? Oh, say they, you have no Monasteries; you have no publick places for religious persons; you have no votaries, that part with their earthly substance; and vow a life of poverty, your Ministers marry, and have children. Thus the Papist is not convinced, because he mistaketh about godliness; and not only they, but many deluded persons amongst us, are offended, because Ministers take maintenance, provide for their families; as if this were against godliness; whereas the neglect of this would be to offend to God.

*Use of Exhortation, to all Ministers and private Christians, to study for convincing lives.* The more power and conviction is therein, the greater is Religion honoured, the more is God glorified; the easier is the conversion of others, and the more is the mouth of prophane men stopped. Consider not only what is lawfull, but what is convincing; especially take heed of such actions, or a life that is the contrary; scandalizing, offending, and causing Religion to be the worse thought of by thy means.





## S E R M, C.

*'Tis Perseverance that is the Crowne of Holinesse.*

2 COR. I. 13.

*And I trust that you shall acknowledge even to the end.*

**T**He Apostle having declared, that he had his testimonials, not onely from his own conscience, but theirs also: he further addeth, that he trusteth this will hold and continue. For it is nothing to have hopeful beginnings, and afterwards to revolt from all again. Blossoms without fruit will not answer Gods expectation.

Now this his hope is expressed in this last clause of the verse, *I trust you shall acknowledge, even to the end.* To the end ] that is, say some, fully and perfectly, opposite to that *ἀνὰ μέρος*, in part, mentioned in the next verse; or else as it is used several times for the end and utmost of a thing; as Christ is said, *John 13. 1. To love his to the end.* And *1 Thessal. 2. 16. Wrath is said to come upon the Jews, ἕως τέλους*, that is, to the end, as some expound it, who are against the Jewes National conversion. But it may be understood of the heaviness and quality of the judgements which are inflicted upon them, being so great that they cannot be more. Or else it may be interpreted of that end, which God hath appointed for the judgements which are to come upon them, till which end be accomplished, there is no possibility of escaping that wrath, which is upon them. When the Apostle saith, *He trusts they shall acknowledge to the end*, some understand it wholly of Paul, as if his meaning was, *My conversation hath hitherto been acknowledged by you to be sincere and upright, and I trust in God, that by his grace he will so preserve me, that you shall never see otherwise by me. I hope, by the assistance of God, always to keep up this integrity of life.* Others understand it of the Corinthians, *I hope as you doe acknowledge us, so notwithstanding all the calumnies and subtil endeavours of the false Apostles to draw you away from me, yet you will persevere and continue in your right judgement concerning me.*

We may very well take in both together; for the latter doth necessarily suppose the former; they could not continue in their acknowledgement of his integrity, unlesse Paul also did persist in his uprightness.

Now in that Paul saith, *He trusteth (viz.) in God*, that he shall be thus preserved: you see the humble and holy frame of his heart; he doth not put confidence in his own strength, in his own gifts and graces, but alone in God; which might teach us, *That though never so godly, yet we are to depend upon God alone for our perseverance in the way to Heaven.* But we have already spoken to this in the general, *That it's the property of the godly to acknowledge the grace of God towards them in all things.* We shall therefore



therefore pitch upon another, which floweth from both the interpretations joyned together, viz.

*That hopefull beginnings in the wayes of Religion, are not enough without a faithfull perseverance therein.*

An hopefull beginning in holiness, is not enough without perseverance.

It is not enough for a man that runneth a race, to set out at first with all speed and swiftnesse, unlesse also he hold out to the end. Neither doth it avail a Traveller to get up betimes, and to beginne his journey with all haste, if afterwards he loiter, or come back again. Now this falleth out too often very sadly in our course of Christianity; many that were once first, are now last: Yea are now nothing at all, but turned clear out of the narrow way, into the broad way that leadeth to Hell and destruction. Thus the Apostle upbraideth the *Galatians*, Galat. 3. 3. *For beginning in the Spirit, and ending in the flesh, are you so foolish, saith he?* It is the greatest folly that can be. For hereby all our former zeal, all our by-past activity for God is forgotten, all is in vain, *Have ye suffered so many things in vain?* as it followeth in the next verse. And again, it is extreame folly, *because we part with God for sinne*, with Heaven for Hell, with honey for gall; we lose our sweetnesse and fatnesse, to become briars and brambles, that are fit for nothing but to be burnt.

To enlarge this, consider,

First, *That a man who doth first set upon the way of Religion, who will become a Disciple of Christ, must above all things look to his foundation well.* He must have a special care that he layeth a good beginning, otherwise though he may make a glorious shew for a while, his fall at last will be very great and terrible. Therefore our Saviour knowing the hypocrisie and inconstancy of mans heart, doth much presse this point, and that to such hearers, who did shew exceeding great zeal and forwardnesse in following after him. witness the Parable of the several kinds of grounds that received the good seed, *Matth. 13.* and *Luke 8.* The difference between the good and bad lay in this, that one had a good and honest heart, wherein the word of God had deep rooting; The other had onely a superficial worke, and therefore when hardship came, could not endure. So likewise the Parable of the *foolish and wise builders*, *Luke 6. 47.* is expressly to this purpose, that none should please themselves in hearing of the Word, in publick duties and profession; but look to their *foundation*, to observe what all their duties and expressions are built upon. For what is built onely upon a Rock will endure, when stormes and tempests shall arise. It is necessary to instance in some of those particulars that will thus qualifie our beginnings. For as in diseases, yea and in sinnes, the Rule is, *To looke to the beginnings*; So in another sense, it is good counsel to observe, what was the first beginning that ever brought you into the wayes of God. How came you to leave off what was formerly done by you, and to appear in a contrary way? For in some sense we may say here, not *dimidium*, but *principium est plus toto*. And

1. A man that would set upon an holy life, must first look to his foundation.

First, *We are to look to our motives*, whether they were *temporal*, *external* upon some outward advantages; or whether *holy* and *spiritual*. Christ had many followers, because of the loaves. There are many that know Christ after the flesh; that come with the petition of *Zebedee's children*, *Grant that we may sit in thy Kingdome, one on the right hand, and another on the left*, thinking Christs Kingdome would be outward and glorious. Now such as these will never continue: It is but painting, and near the fire it will melt: It is but the morning-dew, when the Sunne ariseth it will vanish away. Oh



then above all things look to thy *motives* ! Consider what it was that brought thee off from thy former wayes ? Was it from beholding a spiritual excellency in Christ and holy things ? Was it for godlinesse sake ? Then because Christ is the same, and godlinesse is the same, thou wilt also be the same; but if to get the favour of men, to get wealth, to obtaine paces of credit and profit, then thou art but a meteor compounded of terrestrial materials, and so wilt be tossed up and down, as any winde driveth thee.

A second thing necessary to look to in thy beginnings, is to see, *That the workings of Gods Spirit make impressions deep enough, that it have full rooting.* For *Matth. 13.* and in many other places, we read of many common gifts of Gods Spirit bestowed upon men, whereby they may make very hopefull beginnings; they may be furnished with excellent gifts and abilities, so as to be able to work miracles; they may taste of the good word of God, they may be enlightened, they may believe, they may receive the Word with joy; and are not these great and rare things? How few are there that attain to thus much? They have not that common illumination, nor those transitory affections, whereby we may say, they do for a season rejoyce in the light. When therefore we begin to take the first step to Heaven, we are to consider whether we have any more than the common breathings and inspirations of Gods Spirit, whether we have more than gifts or abilities, more than some bodily ravishments or extasies. For all these do not necessarily inferre the new creature, or a divine nature within us. Indeed we could not have these things without the assistance of Gods Spirit; and therefore when carnal and natural men are partakers of these, they admire them, they take these for grace, they never had such workings upon their souls before; there is a vast difference in themselves, as they find, between what they were once, and what they now feel; and this maketh them very secure and confident; but because a good foundation, was not at first laid, therefore many of such a frame of spirit going no further, do greatly apostatize, and are more taken with their opinions, experiences and apprehensions, than Christ dwelling in them; they are affected with them, and not renouncing all, go out of every thing, that Christ may be exalted, and they debased.

Thirdly, And I will instance in no more, *It becometh those who are beginners in Christianity, deliberately and seriously to consider how much it will cost to be godly.* They are not only to look to their motives, but to the nature of such duties as they must be continually exercised in. For when a man findeeth that the way of godliness is a more self-denying, mortified way, a more opposed and persecuted way than he expected; this maketh him to be offended, and he is ready with *Judas* to betray Christ for a piece of silver; or with *Esaú*, to sell his birth-right for a mess of pottage. Our Saviour speaketh fully to this, *Luke 14. 28, 29, 31, 32.* where pressing those who are to be his Disciples to these great and difficult duties of hating father and mother, and life it self for him; Yea to take up his cross, and to follow him: No more for ever to own any object, as the chiefest delight of his soul, but Christ; he illustrateth this by two similitudes, one of a *builder*, who if he be wise, will consider what expences he is able to bear, before he setteth upon it, lest his folly be known to all: And another of a *King going to warre*, who will first consider what his strength is; and whether he be able to meet his adversary or no. Thus it ought to be with every one that will profess the name of Christ: How come you to do it? Have you seriously considered what it is to be a Christian indeed? Can you hate all, leave all, if Christ require? Can you part with your lusts, your pleasures and profits? If you could have these, and Christ too, then the way to Heaven would not be so difficult, then many would be saved. But this is that which maketh  
so



so many apostasies, so many revoltings and scandals in the way of Religion, that men come on a sudden into the profession of Christ, either for education only, or the rational example, or some external encouragements; and then when they meet with harder brunts than they looked for; when they see Christ will have them to be godly in good earnest, to be self-denying indeed, else they shall not be owned by him, then they discover [that *In sapientis est dicere, non putabam,*] the language of the unwise, I did not look for this, I will go back into Egypt again, rather than endure in this wilderness. Thus you see that a mans beginnings in Religion is all in all: It is not so much to ask, Doth he pray, doth he hear, doth he walk otherwise then he did? But what was the cause of this? How cometh it about that he doth so?

Hence the second particular to clear this truth is, *That true, solid, and sincere beginnings are the cause of our perseverance and continuance in what is holy.* Wheresoever a principle of supernatural life is infused, *Whosoever is borne of God*; The man who hath the fear of God put into his inward parts, this man will be preserved, that nothing shall either totally or finally separate that soul and Christ: So that good and true beginnings, will be sure to have holy and comfortable endings. That place shall suffice for the present, *John 10. 27, 28, 29, 30. My sheep hear my voice,—and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand, &c.* To say they may by their own negligence throw themselves out of Gods hand, is to thwart the comfort intended there for true believers. For if the Devil, or wicked men could not make them to perish, yet if they should do it themselves, if the grace of God did not keep back their own corrupt inclinations, as well as keep off the Devil, they should remain in continual perplexing fears and uncertainties. Where then the foundation-stones of this spiritual building are truly and soundly laid, there no tempests can wholly overwhelm, though they may cause terrible shakings; and therefore perseverance is not the condition upon which the truth of grace depends, but it is the effect of it; that is, we are not to say (as *Arminians* do) If you persevere in believing, if you continue in loving of God, then this will make your grace effectual; then this will make you to be sincere and not hypocrites. For if so, then till we die, we cannot have any true ground of comfort, because we know not how irrecoverably we may fall off from Christ, before that time come. And this is to thwart the general torrent of the Scripture, who calleth upon the people of God, *To rejoice, and to have peace with God, as a Father; and to encourage our selves from the present state of grace we are in, so that we shall never be deprived thereof.* Perseverance then doth not make our grace to be true, but true grace maketh us to persevere, as the wheel runneth round (which is *Austin's* comparison) not that it may be round, but because it is round. It is true, our Saviour saith, *John 8. 31. If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Disciples indeed;* not that this made them so, but because this would declare and manifest them to be so.

2. Sincere beginnings are the cause of perseverance.

Thirdly, *Therefore it is not enough for the grace of God once to put us into a state of holiness, and then to leave us to our selves; but it is necessary that we should have his constant quickning grace, to enable us to hold out to the end.* Christ is not only the Author, but the finisher of our faith, *Heb. 12. 2.* And therefore we have the godly so often praying, that God would keep them, that he would teach them, that he would increase their faith, that he would not lead them into temptation; which necessarily suppose, that the same grace of God, which began the foundation, must also build up all, and finish whatsoever is begun. It is not then from our selves, or from the nature of grace, as if it were not amissible: *Adam*; and the apostate Angels are a clear instance to the contrary; but from the assistance and help of Christ without us.

3. Therefore the grace of God is not only necessary to begin, but also to continue holiness in us.

Lastly;



4. Perseverance promised, doth not exclude, but include fear, watchfulness, and diligence.

Lastly, Though perseverance to the end be thus the promised effect of Gods grace, yet that doth not exclude, but include an holy fear, lest we that stand should fall; a diligent working out of our salvation with fear and trembling; a constant watching over our hearts, and a daily keeping down of our body, lest after we have appeared so long in the wayes of Christ, we afterwards turne aside into the Devils paths. For there are sad instances in Scripture of such, who in outward appearance were eminent in the Church of God (as Judas was) but having not a sure botome, and neglecting such means, which Christ required of them, they became sad scandals in the Church of God, for their fall was great.

*Use of Exhortation, Not to rest upon what we have been.* What though so many years thou hast appeared a Disciple of Christ? For if the foundation was not well laid at first, one time or other there will be a breaking upon thee. What moved thee, what prevailed over thee to become a Disciple of Christ at first, and be moved hereunto? because if thou continuest not in the good way thou didst begin in,

1. *Thy revoltings will do more hurt, then ever thy hopefull beginnings will do good.* Thy later end will more offend God, more scandalize Religion, than ever thy former zeal could exalt it. Oh what a sad thing is it to be a destroyer of what thou didst once build up!

2. *Remember the folly (as you heard) that is in doing so.* For godlinesse is the same, Christ is the same, Heaven is as good as it was at first: Why then should it not be so to thee? What art thou weary of gold for drosse and dirt? Is it better to lie roaring in hell, than to be blessing and praising of God to all eternity?

3. *This maketh thy condemnation greater.* Those prophane wretches that never set their face towards Heaven, that have continued in that wickedness, which of old they were accustomed unto, these will meet with more easie punishment then thou shalt. The Apostle Peter speaketh terribly to such a man, 2 Pet. 2.20. *If when they have escaped the pollutions of the world, they are again intrangled and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.* Better never have known the way of godliness, better never have set thy hand to the plough, then to look back again to thy former lusts.

4. *The anger of God even in this life, doth break out most dreadfully upon such,* blasting their parts, cursing them, that no fruit should grow more upon them; giving them up to abominable lusts, and to such an obstinate, senseless heart, that they are never able to recover again, as appeareth, Heb. 6.6. Oh pittifull and wretched, who are thus cast out from God, and the good thoughts of those that fear God!





## SERM. CI.

*Of the mutability and changeablenesse there is  
in the Affections of the best Churches, to their  
Spiritual Guides and Officers.*

2 COR. I. 14.

*As also you have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing,  
even as ye also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

**T**He former part of this verse containeth a reason, why his hope is so stedfast concerning their perseverance in acknowledgement of him, viz. from what hath been past, what they have done already, they had acknowledged him, and therefore hopeth they will. Hence Chrysostome readeth this passage, before the last clause in the former verse: He maketh those words [I trust you shall acknowledge even to the end] to follow these words. But why doth the Apostle say, *You have acknowledged us in part*? Chrysostom attributeth it to his modesty and humility. For being to say, *That they did acknowledg him to be their rejoicing*: Lest this should seem pride and arrogancy, he addeth, *in part*. Others as Gregorius relateth it to the persons acknowledging, in this sense, that part of them, some of them did so. They were not all carried away with the delusions of false Apostles: Some did keep their integrity and sound judgement. And thus it is used, Rom. 11. 18. *Hardnesse of heart is happened in part to Israel*, which is not to be understood of the hardnesse of heart, for the Jews were wholly delivered up to that; but of part of them, yea the farre greater part; yet some Jews were converted, and did believe in Christ; but it is far more probable to interpret it of the acknowledgement it self. Though they did not so fully as at first acknowledge him, yet since his former Epistle to them, and diligent information of them, they began in some measure to recover out of their error, and so in part entertained better thoughts of him, than before. So that it is like that expression, *I know but in part*, 1 Cor. 13. 12. though there it be ἐν μέρει, or rather like that, 2 Cor. 2. 5. where Paul saith, *He hath not grieved me, but in part*; and Rom. 15. 15. *I have written more boldly to you in part*; and Rom. 15. 24. *That I may in part be filled with you*; in which places it is ἀπὸ μέρους. This expression then doth not relate to the first time of the Corinthians acknowledgement of Paul, which was in their conversion from their Heathenism; for then they did wholly and universally receive him; but to the time of their repentance and recovery out of those decays in their affections towards him, which by the false Apostles had been procured, they began to be something awakened, they saw they had foolishly given ear to other teachers; and now being thus in their recovery, Paul to encourage them that they may acknowledge him, ἐκ τῆς ἀρχῆς both to the end, and fully and perfectly,

not



not in part only, doth take notice of this acknowledgement. We see then here the inconstancy and unsettledness of these *Corinthians*; at first none but *Paul*; he was their father, afterwards through the eloquence and humane perswasions of false teachers, they began to despise *Paul*, to leave him, to admire others. But when *Paul* by his Epistle had severely and thoroughly dealt with them, informing them of several errors and vices that were amongst them, then they begin to apply themselves to him again, and this indeed was the good hand of God, that they did not wholly apostatize, but their withering love to *Paul* did begin to flourish again. From whence observe,

The best Churches are full of changes in their affections to their spiritual guides, though never so faithfull.

*That the best Churches are full of mutability and changeableness, of affections to their spiritual guides and officers, though never so faithfull.*

What fault could these *Corinthians* find with *Paul*? Was he not the first instrument used by God to bring them out of that miserable darkness they sat in? Did not they find the mighty power of God going along with his ministerial labours? Did not their own experience inform them of the great good they had got by him? Yet we see that afterwards the plausible eloquence and subtil crafty insinuations of false teachers had brought *Paul* wholly out of request, he was contemptible. They began to question his Apostleship, and to argue against his office. Thus you see what levity and fickleness may be even in good men. This was *Paul*'s case with other Churches likewise, which maketh him so apologetical in commending his office and call, because they compelled him thereunto, he was forced thereunto; it was not his own credit and glory that he stood upon; he could be contented to be despised by them; but his Office he was bound to vindicate. For this was for their own good, their own souls might perish, if they miscarried herein. Let us instance onely in the Church of the *Galatians*, *Paul* is put to an amazement about them, *Galatians* 1. 4. *I marvelle you are so soone removed from him that called you, unto another Gospel. So soon removed.*] How quickly may false teachers demolish that which the faithfull Officers of Christ have been many years with much zeal and diligence building up? Tares sown by envious persons will quickly come and overgrow the wheat. Hereupon Chap. 3. he sheweth their folly by many convincing and piercing arguments in falling off thus from him; and Chap. 4. 15. puts them in mind, that they had other thoughts of him once. *Paul* was once a blessed man, and his preaching blessed preaching; Where is the blessedness you once spake of? Yea he saith, their affections were so vehement and hyperbolical, *That they would have pluckt out their eyes* (their dearest and tenderest part) *and have given them him, if this could have done him good*: yet how quickly did these boiling affections turn into ice? They will receive other mens doctrines rather than his. And if we see the Apostles of Christ that had their call immediately from him, that were furnished with a large measure of the Spirit, and inabled to do such wonderfull miracles before their eyes, may come to be contemned and vilified, and that by their own people, who had once so highly honoured them: No wonder if ordinary Pastors and Officers do often meet with such entertainment in the world. Yea, was it not thus with Christ himself? Did not he find the grosse mutability of the people, when one while they honour him, crying *Hosanna*, and at another time, *Crucifie him*? If they do thus to the green tree, will they not much rather to the dry? And shall the servants be above his master?

1. It is an imbred corruption for all inferiours to be mutable to their inferiours

To enlarge this, Consider,

First, *That it is an imbred corruption in all inferiours, to be mutable and changeable to their Superiours.* Wise men do observe this mobility in the people, even to their best Governours, so unthankfull and ingratefull are people by nature.



nature. Is not this plain in *Moses*? What a faithfull Governour had he been to the people of *Israel*; like a tender father, he even carried them in his arms; God had honoured him exceedingly before their eyes, working many miraculous mercies for them by his means; yet how often did they murmur against him? which was a great sinne, because as *Moses* telleth them, *Exod. 16. 8.* *Your murmurings are not against us, but the Lord.* Yea they are ready to fall off from *Moses*, and to make themselves a Captain, that they may go again into *Egypt*. Thus the people also dealt with *David*, when they were in bitterness of spirit for the losse of their wives, they spake of stoning *David*. Among the *Heathens* there are plentiful examples of this unthankfull mutability; *Camillus* and *Themistocles*, with others; which made the latter say, when they had cast him off, after all the good service he had done for them, *That they did with him, as beasts doe, in a storm runne to a tree to shelter themselves, and when that is over, they fall a browsing on it, and breaking the boughs thereof.* How many of their famous Worthies have the *Heathens* banished most ingratelly, and then in their necessities intreated them to come again? Which made one wise *Roman* say, when perswaded to enter upon some publick design for the common good, but dangerous, deny, saying, *Why should wise men venture themselves for fools?* The *Athenians* were impetuous to put *Socrates* to death, and after he was dead, then they were grieved and impatient, till they had destroyed those that were the Authors of it. Now if it be thus in civil affairs, no wonder if there be more changeableness, and more ingratitude in Church-matters. For in the faithfull discharge of our spiritual office, there we directly oppose the natural inclination and love of men to their sinfull pleasures; we deal chiefly with the inward man, and the matter we propound for the Doctrine of it to be believed, is wholly transcendent to their humane apprehensions, and the goodness of it is altogether supernatural; Yea contra-natural, take man in his sinfull naturals. Hence it is that spiritual governing is far more difficult than civil; men being more willing to receive what maketh for their bodily good and welfare, then for their souls and spiritual estate.

Secondly, *This inclination to changeablenesse and mutability in matters of Religion, hath greater temptations in rich and famous Cities, than in villages and small parochial places.* Now *Corinth* (as you heard) was a famous and rich City, eminent for trading, yea and for earning and gifts. Hence *Paul* doth in none of his Epistles, so much debase the wisdom of the world, endeavouring to exalt Christ above all things, as in his Epistles to these *Corinthians*; and it seemeth they did abound with many excellent gifts and abilities, as the Apostle many times witnesseth. Now this was their snare and temptation; this made them proud of their knowledge; this made them admire gifts more than grace; this caused them to make parties and factions; some cried up one teacher, some another: So that their wealth and gifts did prove a great temptation to them; and by this means *Paul* came to be undervalued. Thus it falleth out many times in great and populous places, where are variety of Ministers, and of gifts, and a people raised up in knowledge and wealth; it is very hard for them to keep in a constant, real esteem of sound and soul-saving truths; but with the people of *Israel*, to be weary of *Manna*, to desire even garlick and onions above it. The Gospel was at first preached and planted in Cities, and their Churches were first constituted, it being a long time ere the little villages in the Countrey did receive the Christian faith. Hence to this day (say some) we call *Heathens Pagans, à pagis, from villages*, because they did last of all receive the Christian faith. But then they have this advantage, that they are freed from those many temptations that are in the Churches of Cities; for they having not many Officers, nor hearing variety of gifts, are not so tempted to be alwayes lusting after some new thing, as in the fore-mentioned places; yet for all this they have the

2. This inclination to this changeableness hath more temptations in great than small places.



same corrupt inclination; and if they have not the temptation brought to them, they will seek out for the temptations: and hence many villages are quickly poisoned with corrupt and erroneous wayes. For the *Devil he goeth up and down roaring, to seek whom he may devour*, whether in Cities or villages.

What are the causes of this changeableness

Now let us consider of the *Causes* which make such a change and alteration, and that many times in those who are very good, or at least apparently so. And

1. Inconstancy and fickleness.

1. *This ariseth from the ficklenesse and inconstancy that is in many men.* There are few that profess Religion, that do obtain to a sound mind, that are well rooted in the first principles of Religion; They content themselves with general and confused apprehensions, and therefore can speak of those things, which yet they have no clear understanding about. Now how can such straws and feathers as these, but be blown away with every wind of doctrine? It is the Apostles expression, *Ephes. 4. 14.* implying, that it is childishness, levity, want of a serious, weighty and solid judgement, that maketh us leave the faithfull Ministers of God, and greedily run after false teachers.

2. An overhasty receiving of the Ministers.

2. *An overhasty and unadvised receiving of the Ministers of the Gospel, before we well consider what we do.* For thou who receivest a man to be the Pastor of thy soul, thou must not look that he should come down to thee, but thou to him: I mean, you must not expect that he should comply with you in your lusts, in your sinnes, in your superstitions. But on the contrary, that you will readily submit to whatsoever he shall from the word of God make known to you. It is unreasonable to look that a Minister should go from his Commission; he hath not a magisterial, but ministerial Authority; he cannot make virtue, vice; or vice, virtue; he cannot make the way to Heaven broader than it is; he may not dispense Ordinances, otherwise than according to the order of Christ: and if so, judge whether is more reasonable, that you yeild your selves to Christs commands, or we comply with your unlawfull wayes? Certainly we cannot come off to your principles; we shall be damned, if we do. *If I please men (viz. in sinfull things) I should not be the servant of Christ, Gal. 1. 10.* said Paul. And we must with *Elisha* profess, *Job 32. 21, 22.* *We know not to give flattering titles, in so doing God our maker would soon take us away.* If it be thus with us, that we are bound up; and you on the contrary are commanded to come out of all evil wayes, and receive the good word of God from our hands, then it ought not to be any offence or staggering unto you, if you find us out of Gods word, enjoyning those things which the corrupt nature of man is against. But this many times maketh a great change in a people; they expected that the Ministers of God should comply with their ends, their lusts, and then they would never alter their affections from them; but when it proved otherwise, then they did never so much advance and exalt, as they will afterwards condemn and vilifie. This was plain in *John's* hearers; his strict life and unusual conversation made them come into the wilderness to see him; they joyced to see such a Prophet that was of their own, and therefore they flocked after him, *John 5. 35.* *They did for a while rejoyce in his light;* but when they saw he gave testimony to Christ, and would not be a Prophet to serve their ends, then they railed on him, and said, *He had a Devil.*

3. Curiosity.

3. *Curiosity, and an itching affection after new things, doth make us very changeable.* An ill stomach must have variety of sauces; and what we are used to, is apt to breed contempt. It is a brand upon the *Athenians*, *Act. 17. 21.* *That they spent their time in nothing else, but to tell or hear, some new thing.* This is a dangerous disease in a mans soul, not to love and delight in sound and known truths, but to affect things that were never heard of before; some new Religion, some new expression, some new notion. Oh pray to God against such a sinfull distemper! it hath been the undoing of many souls. Do you

like



lik the Sunne the worse, because every day it riseth upon you? It is the same Sunne, and yet you are not weary of it: no more ought ye to be of divine and holy truths.

4. Sometimes mistakes about the Doctrine they deliver, maketh them change their affections. Some speeches are hard speeches, they take offence at some expressions; and this hath altered many, when the fault was in their understandings, not in the Doctrine delivered. Thus it was with Christ himself, *Joh. 6. 34, 35.* when he said, *My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.* Many of his Disciples said, *This was an hard saying, who can bear it?* and from that time many went back from him, and walked no more with him.

4. Mistakes about the Doctrine delivered.

5. A faithfull and conscionable discharge of their duties, in reprovng, admonishing or setting up the pure wayes of Christ, do many times cause men to flie off, and from friends sometimes to become enemies and opposers. This did in part so enrage the Galatians, which made Paul say, *Am I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?* Gal. 4. 16. What made the Israelites of old oppose and persecute the holy Prophets of God? Was it not because they reprov'd them for their finnes and false worship, and endeavoured the restoring of his Ordinances according to his own primitive and pure institution? This maketh men acknowledge their Ministers but in part; some things they will praise, but other things as much dispraise; and all is, because we are unwilling the Officers of Christ should faithfullly and sincerely discharge their duty.

5. A faithfull discharge of the Ministers office.

Lastly, Many times the members of Christs Church are alienated from their Pastors, by the importunity of such men, who lie in wait to deceive. All the mischief that was done to Paul in this point, it was by false teachers: Nothing hindered so much the comfortable progress of his Ministry, as the subtil stratagems of such wolves in sheeps cloathing, they had a more pleasing taking way with them; they had their *χρηστολογία*, Rom. 16. 18. *their sweet fair speeches*; their insinuating orations; and by this means these glistering serpents crept into them. Again, they pretend much love and compassion to them, it grieveth them to see how Paul seduceth them, how self-seeking and severe he is; as for them they have tender bowels towards them; and thus by this loving pretence they catch them in their snares. Thus Paul, Gal. 4. 17. *They zealously affect you, but not well; yea they would exclude us, that ye might affect them.* Thus you see what their design was, to take them off wholly from Paul, to exclude him, that so they might have all the love and honour. Thus you see causes that may make people abate or decay in their affections to their spiritual guides.

6. The importunity of deceivers.

Let the Use be, 1. Of Instruction to the Ministers of God, To expect such ingratitude in the world, to look for such ebbings and flowings of mens affections in the faithfull discharge of their Ministry, every man is a liar, every man is a reed shaken with the wind, if they be not thoroughly consolidated by grace: Only do thou look thou givest no just occasion of such a change, either by thy negligence in the Ministry, or indiscreet rash actions; and then if they will leave thee, thou hast no more to say, than Christ himself, *Will ye also go away?* John 6. 67.

Use 2. Of Exhortation, To you that are people, Is there such a mutable disposition in your nature, so much inconstancy, curiosity and love to your selves, as to make you hate what you once loved? Then take heed to your selves, watch against such a disposition. It is an excellent sign to love and delight in old known truths, and not to be weary of them; yea the more thou hearest, the longer thou livest under a Ministry, the more thy heart is affected with it.





## SERM. CII.

## Of the mutuall rejoycing which ought to be betwixt Minister and People.

I COR. I. 14.

*That we are your rejoycing, as ye also are ours.*

**T**His is the Second particular in the Text, and doth contain the Specification wherein this acknowledgment of the *Corinthians* did consist, viz. *That he was their Rejoycing*. However some false teachers had endeavoured to take off their affections from him, yet they had acknowledged him to be their Father, and Master, by whom they were faithfully instructed in the wayes of Godliness; and for this they did blesse God, and rejoyce that they had such a Teacher; which was so great a mercy, that few did enjoy the like. Now the Apostle addeth, That this rejoycing was mutual; he did as well rejoyce in such apt and obedient Schollars. *Chrysostome* observeth this Addition to be a great Expression of *Pauls* Modesty and Humility, for that the *Corinthians* should glory and rejoyce in such an eminent Teacher as *Paul* was; It is no wonder but that he should rejoyce in them, who were so inconstant, and so uncertain in their affections to him; yea, who were to be blamed so much in Doctrinalls, and practicalls: This may make us admire. But (sayes *Chrysostome*, *This Paul doth for humility sake, that he might not procure envy, as if he thought too arrogantly of himself, therefore he assumeth them into a co-partnership with his glory and rejoycing*. The Original word *καὶ ἡμεῖς* lieth already bear opened: There is nothing difficult in the words, onely when *Paul* and the *Corinthians* are thus said to be one anothers rejoycing, we are to understand, that the Act is here put for the Object of it, as often in the Scripture. Thus rejoycing is put for the Object, Matter, and Cause of our rejoycing; and if you say, *We are to rejoyce in God onely, in the Lord*, not in men, that is true, *We are to rejoyce in God*, onely as the Author of all our good; yet we may in men, as they are instruments used by God to communicate his benefits to us. Thus a people may rejoyce in a faithfull Minister, not principally and originally, but secondarily, as the Instrument which God hath made very successfull to their souls.

The Observation then is,

It is a happy thing when Minister and people can rejoyce in one another.

*That it is a most happy and blessed thing, when Minister and people can, upon just and holy grounds rejoyce mutually in each other.*

When the people can blesse God for the Ministerial gifts and graces bestowed upon their Pastor; and he again can praise God, that he hath a willing, teachable, and obedient people, ready to receive the Ordinances of Christ in the power and purity of them. This is a rare priviledg, Oh there are but few Churches, of which the Ministers may say, as *Paul* to the *Colossians*,  
Chap.



Chap. 2. That he doth rejoyce in beholding their order, and faith in Christ, To meet with a people that are neither ignorant, heretical, nor prophane, but willing to walk according to Christs rule, and his order; this is to see heaven upon earth: The Apostle findeth such matter of joy, not onely in those *Corinthians*, but in many other Churches; For as he had more Labours, more Oppositions, more Persecutions than others, so also God gave him more joy and comfort in beholding the spiritual successe of his Labours; for this was the onely comfort of his spiritual heart, to see men imbrace Christ, and to live worthy of the Gospel, it was not his own Glory, Honor, and greatness, that he aymed at; which is an excellent example to us Ministers of the Gospel, that our Matter of joy should not be any earthly riches, or wealth, any great fame, or worldly esteem, but that we are to win people to Christ alone, not our selves; Thus the Apostle calleth the *Philipians* his joy and crown, *Phil. 4. 1.* and *1 Thes. 2. 19, 20.* speaking of his ardent affections to see their face, by way of interrogation, the more emphatically to express himself, he saith, *What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoycing? Are not even ye?* And then addeth positively the same thing, for, or rather, surely, certainly, ye are our rejoycing, *ye* is not a note of reasoning, for then the Apostle would prove *Idem* for *Idem*, as they say, but of Affirmation, and asseveration, *Ye are our crown of rejoycing.* *Grotius* saith, *It is an allusion to Kings, who on their solemn festival dayes have not an ordinary, but extraordinary Crown to wear, for the greater pomp and glory:* Such extraordinary honor would the *Thessalonians* be to Christ, at the great day!

But let us consider this in the general, and then amplifie it respectively, to Minister, and people. And

First, *The Relation of Pastor and people is by divine Institution.* Christ himself hath appointed the Office it self, and the application of it to this or that man through the desire of the Church; so that, as Churches are of Gods gathering: They are his creature, in a more special manner than the world is; so likewise are the Officers, and Spiritual Guides to teach them, *1 Cor. 12. 28.* *God hath set in his Church Apostles and Teachers.* Thus *Act. 20. 28.* The Holy Ghost is said to set them *Overseers over their flock.* seeing therefore that this relation is built on a Divine Foundation, no wonder if managed according to Divine Rules; that it is the cause of exceeding great joy. These Relations are respectively for supernatural and spiritual ends, and effects: The Minister is for illumination, Conversion, Edification; for the destroying of the power and Kingdome of Satan, as also the establishing and promoting the Kingdome of grace in the hearts of the people: The people also, they are to be matter of encouragement to him; they are to be helpfull and assistant in their way, that Godliness may flourish, that the ends of the Ministry may not be frustrated. The Apostle sometimes taketh notice of the great usefulness, and serviceableness even of some women in that kinde; For, though Ministers be compared to Light, to the Sun, and Starrs, yet in this there is a difference. The Starrs give Light and Influence into these sublunary things, but receive no benefit at all from them again; but the Ministers of the Church, even though as eminent as *Paul*; yet they acknowledg the manifold benefits, and that in a spiritual way, which they may receive from their people again: now then, how happy is it when there is a reciprocal and circular helping of each other, when spiritual guides do convert, edifie, and quicken up their people; and again the people do assist, help, and quicken up their Officers; certainly, as spiritual delights are greater than any bodily ones, because the objects are more excellent and usefull; so should this mutual rejoycing in our spiritual joy surpass all the delight that we take in our natural and civil relation, neither the delight of a Wife in her Husband, or of a Childe in his Father, should be equal

I. The relation  
betwixt  
Pastor and  
people is  
by divine  
Institution.



equal to the joy of a people in Faithfull Officers: And so, *è contra*; the Reason is evident, because the effects of this Relation are spiritual, heavenly, and so infinitely transcending all earthly comeforts; and therefore such who find no matter of rejoycing herein, it is because they are carnal, sensual; they abide under the Dominion of their lusts, they never found the Ministry spiritual and powerfull to them; They never had the experience of the blessed effects thereof upon their hearts, and then, How can they rejoyce in it?

2. Therefore doth the Devil endeavour to make differences betwixt Minister and beople.

3. *Seing that this mutual assistance is appointed by God as a special means to destroy the Kingdome of Satan: Hence it is, that he doth most assault this indeavouring to make discords, and differences between Minister, and people, That so both the benefit and comefort of such unity might be frustrated.*

It is true, the Devil delights to sow his Tares in every field; therefore in civil estates, in domestical relations, he throweth his Firebrands, and loveth to see all in Passions, and discontents; but especially his design is against those spiritual relations, because the well manning of them doth more immediately oppose his throne of darkness. For this end he stirred up so many fals Prophets and Teachers, whose works was to divide between the people and their faithfull guides. And can we think, the Apostles would have written so Apologetically in many places, condescended so much in the wayes of Humility, and diligence, to win their affections, but that he knew by such Dissentions, the Devil would enlarge his Dominions? Hence it is, that Calvin upon that place of 2 Cor. 2. 11. *Lest Satan should get an advantage of us*, though he take notice of their exposition, who refer it to the Incestuous person; as if Satans designe was upon that occasion to have him swallowed up with excessive sorrow, yet he doth in a great part relate it, to the Dissention that the Devil endeavoured to make between them and Paul: for if Paul was for the confirming of their love to that person now repenting; but the Corinthians, under a pretence of zeal against sin, should be against him: This would have caused sad Divisions, and so thereby Satan would have prevailed. It is observed, as one of Julians devilish designs against Christianity, to make a difference between the Christians and their godly Pastors; and therefore he did craftily and secretly pour all the oyl he could into such flames, to make them greater: and truly the Instances of such differences, even in the Reformed Churches do give too full a testimony of the Devils labour herein. Should we speak of the Churches troubles at Franckford, though exiled, and under Persecution, The sharpest whereof was between the Flock and their Shepherd; yea, of the hot contention between Geneva and Calvin, and in many other Churches, we may easily be perswaded, that there is scarce any one thing, wherein the Devil goeth more about as a roaring Lyon to deceive them, than to break the staves of beauty, and bands between Shepherd and Sheep, which should make both Minister and people the more watchfull and diligent; and also much in Prayer, that God would disapoint all such purposes of Satan, and his Instruments. This may suffice in the General.

How and why may a people rejoyce in their Pastor.

1. As the instruments whereby God hath instructed and converted them.

Let us now proceed to the respective particulars: and first,

*In what sence, and how a people may rejoyce in their faithfull Guides.*

And first, *They are to rejoyce in them as those instruments which God hath used to bring spiritual light unto their minde, and heavenly beat into their hearts.*

For this it is the Apostle doth so much insist upon, to convince the Corinthians, That if ever they did believe, if ever they felt any thing of the saving efficacy of Gods spirit upon their hearts, it was by his Ministry; and therefore they would be unthankfull to God, if they did not take notice of Gods special blessing to them by his means. It is true, 1 Cor. 3. we see there the Apostle zealously bearing down their factions and Contentions, which they raised by setting up one Officer, and Teacher to the despising of another; and thereupon exaltered



exalteth Christ onely: But yet, though Christ be the principal only, and he alone giveth the encrease, yet he granteth the Necessity of the Ministry withall; *Paul* must Plant, *Apollo* must water, and these are Ministers by whom they believed, *Ver. 5.* Although then it be our duty to lift up our hearts to God alone, as he in whom and by whom all spiritual success doth arise to us; yet we are to rejoyce in such instruments as God useth. For if we may be glad of such Instruments that cause our temporall comforts and supports: If the Childe may rejoyce in the father, if an indigent man in him who is potent, and bountifull; no wonder then, if we do cry out, *How welcome are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of peace, Rom. 10. 15. How beautiful are the very feet of such?* So that it plainly demonstrateth all such to be delivered up to the spirit of slumber and prophaneness, or of Error and Heresie, who do not find this cause to rejoyce in them, as Gods Instruments to their Soules.

2. We are to rejoyce in them because of their works sake, and the Faithfull discharge of their duties.

2. For their works sake.

And the more powerfull they are herein, the greater ought our joy to be; Thus the Apostle, *1 Cor. 4. 1. Let a man account of us as the Embassadors of God, and Stewards of Christ.* Thus the Apostle also commandeth *1 Thessal. 11. 13. To esteem very highly of those who are over them, and admonish them, and that for their works sake.* Though they do admonish and reprove you, which is as displeasing to a sin, as salt to a sore; yet you are to esteem highly of them, This requireth not onely external respect, but cordial and Internal, and this must be for their works sake. Many times a people may glory in the Abilities, in the Learning and admirable gifts of their Teachers, thinking that thereby they surpass other Congregations; This is a vain-glorious thing, too often seen in great Cities; but the Apostle saith, it must be for their works sake, because they do faithfully and powerfully lead you into the paths of Eternal Life. Thus, as *David* esteemed the word of God above gold and silver, because thereby he was forewarned from sin; The spiritual, and holy commands of God not induring any sin, made him thus in love with it; So it should also be with our people, they should delight and rejoyce in the Ministry, because it is efficacious against sin, because it enlighteneth, it converteth, it destroyeth the works of the Devil; so that this particular discovers the Prophaneness and impiety of such men, who rejoyce most in such Ministers as are either lazy and negligent, or that are dissolute, and carnally humouring men in their evil wayes: These they boast in, and rejoyce in; they account none like them. Thus God of old complained of the people of Israel, that they loved such who did sow pillowes under their armes, and encouraged the hearts of those that were wicked; but made those sad, whom the Lord would not have made sad, *Ezek. 13. 10, 22.* How miserable are such a people who rejoyce in the greatest judgment that can befall them? Rejoyce not in this, but weep and mourn rather, when those who should deal faithfully with thee, do flatter and seduce thee, daubing with untempered mortar: For God will destroy both such Prophets and such a People.

Thirdly, We are to rejoyce in the spiritual success and prosperity of their work.

3. In the spiritual success of the Minister.

It is very sad to hear those complaints in the Scripture, *Who hath believed our report?* and *All the day long have we stretched out our hands unto a rebellious people:* To have much rain fall upon the ground, and nothing but bryars and thorns coming up thereupon. When therefore we shall finde that God makes the Ministry a favour of life, and not of death, unto many; this ought greatly to rejoyce us, when thou findest it to be a mighty word upon thy own heart, or upon the hearts of others, wherein we ought to be exceeding glad. For, Is there any greater mercy can befall thee, than to have the Word thus a converting and saving Word to thee? Thou mayest admire thy pleasures, thy Profit,



profit, thy lusts, and judg them sweet; But know, that the saving efficacy of the Ministry upon thy soul will be the blessedness indeed that shall endure for ever; and therefore, when you hear men praise a Ministry, admire that; examine what is the spiritual good they have found thereby, what Reformation, what a change hath it made? The Apostle telleth these very *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. 5. 6. *that their glorying was not good: why so? because they did not purge out the old leaven: They did not cast out that wicked person from amongst them; now all this while they gloryed in their able Teachers, they magnified the wisdom and Eloquence of many that preached amongst them; but saith he, your glorying is not good: where is the holy Order, the godly Discipline, the spirituall Reformation, that you should have attained unto by the Gifts and Ministry of your Teachers? This alone will cause us truly and solidly to rejoyce.*

*Use of Instruction:* How impossible is it for men upon true and spiritual grounds to rejoyce in the Ministry, unless they have felt some special efficacy upon it in their hearts? They may glory in the parts, in the Eloquence, in the abilities of men, but not for the spirituall success of the work. In Popery they will have their people glory in their Church-Officers because of the external pomp and stateliness they live in, and so they become revered for their outward glory: But this is wholly unsuitable with the Scripture-glory, and the Scripture-rejoycing: for this alone will make thee praise God, if thou hast found his Ministers to be the happy Instruments of grace and peace to thy soul.



## S E R M. CIII.

### *Of the Rejoycing a faithfull Minister hath in an Obedient people.*

2 COR. I. 14.

*That we are your rejoycing, as you also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

**T**Here remaineth the Second part of the Doctrine to be dispatched, which is,

*The Ministers rejoycing upon good grounds in his people.*

For you heard how happy and blessed a thing it was when there was cause for a mutuall and reciprocall rejoycing in one another, between Minister and People. For God many times, upon wise ends, doth divide those who should be conjoynd: sometimes he sends faithfull Embassadors to a froward and rebellious people, as God in *Ezekiel*, that the people were *bryars and thornes* to him; and that he did dwell among *scorpions*; yet he must not be afraid, or dismayed at their looks, though they were a *rebellious house*, Chap. 2. 6. Now what comefort could *Ezekiel* have from such a people? They were so many bryars and thornes scratching and tearing of him;



so many scorpions that had stings: and what danger was it to dwell with such? Sometimes again there may be a godly and holy people, highly prising the means of grace; and yet God set over them dumb or wicked Pastors, that are *Idols*, and no shepherds. Now when this is so, their is little rejoycing in one another: and if *Jeboash*, the King of *Israel*, 2 Kings 13.9. compared an unequal Warr to an unequal and unfit Marriage, *the thistle in Lebanon* with the *Cedar in Lebanon*, which proved destructive immediately; for the wilde beast in *Lebanon* came, and trode down the Thistle: How much more now is this true in this spiritual relation? When an Ignorant or prophane Minister is over a gracious people, then the *Thistle* is married to the *Cedar*, but but this cannot hold long; for the Devil, which is like the wilde beast, the roaring Lyon, he will come, and devour all; so that, what the Apostle speaketh, 2 Cor. 6. 14. may well be applyed here, *Be not unequally yoked: what communion hath light with darkness?* It is then very uncomfortable, when a Godly people hath an unfaithfull Minister, or a faithfull Minister an ungodly and a froward people; This will make him sadly to bewail his condition, crying out with *Isay*, *Wo unto me, for I dwell among men of polluted lips*, *Isay* chap. 6. 12. This maketh him like *Lot* to torment his righteous soul by seeing and hearing the wickedness of those he dwelleth amongst, 2 Pet. 2. 8. This is a bitter and sad Persecution: as it were, thou dost not onely persecute a Minister by the malicious opposition, and violent courses against him, but even thy ungodly life, that thou wilt not be reformed, that thou wilt not hear and humbly receive the word of God; this maketh them grieved, and wearied in their work; This is a persecution of their righteous souls, as *Jeremy* said, chap. 13. 17. *If you will not heare it, my soul shall weep in secret places, for your pride*. Thus the wickedness and ungodly wayes of a stubborn people are the very heart-breaking of a godly Minister; while they deride, and scorn, his soul mourneth for them; while they revile, and reproach him maliciously, he giveth himself to prayer for them; Even as it is with some tender Father, who hath a Son grievously distracted, and bereaved of his wits, while he rageth, and raverh at his Father, while he miscaleth him and striketh at him; The Father stands by sadly affected, weeping, and praying for his childe, that he might be brought to his sound minde again. Thus doth a godly tender Pastor mourn over a wicked, scornfull, and rebellious People.

But let us proceed to shew *Wherein a faithfull Minister of Christ hath cause to rejoyce over his people:*

And first, *When they are a teachable and learning people, very tractable, and ready to receive Instruction.* This is a great joy and Incouragement: There are many, who, as they are sottishly ignorant in matters of Religion, so they will continue obstinately therein: They are not desirous and hearkning after knowledg; that say with those in *Job* 21. 14. unto God, *Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledg of thy wayes*. Now it is for want of a true knowledg of God, that iniquity and profaneness doth abound every where; as *Hos.* 4. 1. Is it not better, and more comfortable to be a Shepherd to the bruit beasts, than to such men; for the Shepherd driveth his sheep into what Pasture he pleaseth, and ordereth them according to his desire: but these, though bruitish in knowledge, yet are devillish in wilfulness and obstinacy, and therefore, as they ignorant, so they will live and die, and go to Hell in it, go from darkness here to darkness hereafter. It is a very great comfort to preach to a knowing people, to men of understanding, and that are desirous to be more and more and more instructed: There is great hope of such a peoples conversion, afterwards, as you see by that expression, *Isa.* 6. 10. *Lest they understand with their heart, and be converted*. What good doth the light at nown day to a blinde man? This makes Preaching in vain, and Hearing in vain.

Wherein a  
faithfull  
Pastor hath  
cause to  
rejoyce over  
his people.  
1. When they  
are tractable  
and teachable.



Motives to  
knowledg in  
spiritual  
things.

1. Consider  
the Necessity  
of it.

Now, that you may be matter of rejoycing to your Minister in this respect, consider these things;

First, *The necessity of knowledg in holy things*: There is no salvation without it, 1 Tim. 2. 4. God would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledg of the truth; If they will be saved, they must first come to the knowledg of the truth. Thou that art sottishly ignorant of the Principles of Christianity, there is no way for thy salvation; such Ignorance as well as Profaneness will necessarily damn, Isa. 26. 11. *It is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them, will not have mercy on them.* This very Text breaketh the staff of your confidence; for you are ready to say, Alas, we are poor ignorant people, we know nothing, What then will this help you? No, *God that made you, will not have mercy on you.* It is true, we pity poor old blinde men, because they are blinde against their will, They would use any means to have their sight: but you that are Ignorant, are no wayes to be pitied, for it is affected and willfull, your eyes might be opened, and you will not: Oh how sad is it to preach to stones, to preach to posts, for so we do, while to the grossly ignorant. Therefore as one said, when asked what was the benefit of Learning; saith he, *ne lapis sedeat super lapidem*, that when a man is grown up, he may not in the Counsel-House sit as a stone upon a stone; implying, that a man without knowledg was no better than a senseless stone: and truly this good would you have by getting knowledg, that in the Congregation thou mayest not sit a block upon a block. How grievous is it to have Idol-hearers, that have eyes but see not, and ears but hear not? Know then, to be an ignorant people is matter of grief to a godly Minister; for such carry about with them, the visible mark as it were, of condemnation.

2. The usefulness of it.

Secondly, That ye may be a knowing people, Consider, not only *the necessity*, but the *usefulness and profitableness of Christian knowledg*: By this we come to know how to please God, how to be saved, how to enjoy eternal life. All are convinced of the necessity of knowledg of earthly things, They must know how to plow and sow. Do you not set your children to know a Trade, do you not say, They must do something that they may live, implying they are outwardly undone, if they know not these things? Oh foolish and unwise! Must men know how to live here, and not know how to live hereafter? Must men know how to keep of poverty, and not how to keep off damnation? Why then do you not lay aside all things, to get some competent knowledg of Christian Principles, without which you cannot get any good by Sermons, by sacraments; without which ye cannot tell how to live, or how to die? And never complain, saying, Thou art too old, or thy memory is bad, It is plain, thou hast no heart to it, no zeal and affection for it. For how many as unlikely as thou art have by diligence got knowledg, even to the admiration of others? And God, he useth to bless those, and to encrease their gifts, that are serious in their desires after these things: But the truth is, The world hath thy heart, Lusts have thy heart; If thou didst follow the wise mans Counsel, *to seek for it more than gold or silver, more than any precious treasure*, thou wouldest not be such a blinde wretch as thou art; Then, saith Solomon, *thou shalt understand the fear of the Lord, and finde the knowledg of God, Prov. 2. 3, 4, 5.* If then thou dyest in thy ignorance, and without instruction, which is threatned as a dreadfull judgment, Prov. 11. 23. blame thy own corrupt, lazy, and wicked heart: now this universal ignorance is the more abominable, because we enjoy the plentiful means of knowledg we have constant Preaching, we have the Word read, and Ordinances administred in our known tongue. How intolerable then is it, if generally people be still as ignorant as if the Bible were not translated, and all Church-Administrations dispensed in an unknown tongue?

Secondly, *Then are people matter of rejoycing to a ministry, when they are believing*



believing of the word of God, and receiving it as Gods word, thereby awing their hearts, and captivating the whole man thereunto. For knowledg is not enough. How many know, and can remember places of Scripture, can understand most Sermons? But they do not believe those things to be true, neither are they ingrafted in their hearts by faith, saying, This is Gods word, how can I go against it? this is the word of God, and not man, that condemneth this sin, commands that duty. Wo then be unto me if I gainsay it, for this the Apostle doth exceedingly commend the *Thessalonians*, 1 *Thes.* 2.13. ye he is so affected with it, that he did thank God without ceasing in his respect, even because they received the word of God, which they heard of Paul, not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh in those that believe. How comfortable a thing is this, for a Minister to see his people receiving the truths he preaches of Gods word? They hear and tremble, they believe and tremble; so that without this faith, as it is impossible to please God, so it is to get any good by the Ministry. As its not the seeing of meat, but the eating of it, and digesting, that doth nourish: so neither is it the hearing and knowing, but the believing of it that maketh a powerfull change upon a people.

Thirdly, Then a people rejoyce a faithfull Minister, when to knowledge and Faith there is added that compleat efficacy of the Word, as to regenerate us, and make us to become new creatures. Even men who yet will lye roaring for ever in Hell, may have great knowledg, and some faith; yet, because not regenerated, not delivered fully from their bondage of sin they lived in, do therefore come short of Eternall glory. Now this is the most noble effect of the Preaching of the Word, that it becomes spiritual seed, to give men a new spirituall life, as well to feed, to nourish them therein, *James*, chap. 4. 18. Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth. and *John* 17. Sanctifie them by thy word. When therefore the Ministers of God do not onely become Instructors, but Fathers, as the Apostle saith he was to these *Corinthians*: this is matter of great joy, Though ye have ten thousand Instructors, yet not many Fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel, 1 *Corinth.* chap. 4. 15. This then is a foundation of much indearing comfort, when a people can owne their Minister to be a Father to them, and he them for his spiritual children; when by his Ministry they are able to say, I was enlightened, I was converted, I was sanctified. Surely, if Aristotle say, We can never recompence the Gods, nor our naturall Fathers; neither are we able to requite our spiritual Fathers. Although as in nature it is observed, that love, though it be fire, yet it doth descend, not ascend; so it is in spirituall relations. Such Ministers who have been instrumental to the conversion of any, do far more rejoyce in such a people, then they can in the Minister. Hence the Apostle speaketh most affectionately, in an overflowing manner, 2 *Cor.* 6. 11, 12, 13. O ye *Corinthians*, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged, ye are not frightened in us, but in your own bowels; now, for a recompence in the same (I speak, as unto children) be ye also enlarged. Here you see Pauls heart was more enlarged to them than theirs to his. This then is an unspeakable mercy, when we shall be able to say with the prophet, (though in another sense) Behold I, and the children which thou hast given me, *Isa.* chap. 8. 18. Or, as it is said of Christ, after all his sufferings for us, He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. He shall see his seed, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand, *Isa.* 53. 10, 11.

Fourthly, Then are they rejoycing to a Minister, when they are a ready and willing people in all Gospel Duties: when they are his living Sermons, his walking Sermons; when they endeavour to adorn the Gospel by their conversation, when there are no profane persons, no bitter roots growing up amongst

2. When people believe and receive the Word as Gods Word.

3. When they are converted by the Word.

4. When they are ready to all duties.



amongst them, but a Garden without weeds, a floor of pure wheat without chaff; a net of good fish onely; a field of wheat without tares. It is true, there is no such people, no such Church to be expected in this life: But the less weeds, the fewer brambles, the greater joy to the Husbandman. What a glorious commendation doth the Apostle give this Church, 2 Cor. 2, 3. when he calleth them *his Epistle to be read and known of all men*? Yea he saith, *They are manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ*. O what unspeakable gladness of heart would it be to a Minister to be able to make such an holy boast of his people, That they are his Sermons to be read, and known of all men? we may know what he preacheth by the lives of his people. The Apostle instanteth in one Duty, viz. their *Liberality to the poor Saints of God*, 2 Cor. 9. 13. For thereby they did glorifie God, by their professed Subjection to the Gospel. This is blessed, when a people in all Gospel Duties will not cavil, and be contentious, but declare their professed subjection thereunto.

5. When they are ready to submit to the whole order of Christ.

5. *When they are a people willing and ready to submit to the whole Order of Christ*. To reform all corruptions and abuses; as also, with much Repentance to manifest their sorrow for any negligence and remission herein. These very *Corinthians*, as they were matter of joy, so also of much trouble, of much sorrow, of much trouble, of much sorrow, and Humiliation. Hence he speaketh remarkably, 2 Cor. 12. 20. *I fear least when I come, I shall not finde you such as I would; and that I shall not be found unto you, such as ye would; and least when I come again, my God humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of their uncleanness*. By this you see, that though the Apostle had much rejoycing from them, yet he had also much Humiliation: Many did not repent, and therefore put him to more severity than he would. Now then that *Paul* may not contradict himself, They could not be his rejoycing, and mourning also. Therefore we must either hereby gather that the *Corinthians* were unconstant, sometimes hopfull and reforming, and afterwards again relapsing: or else this is spoken not in respect of all, but some of them, who did grossly fail in their duty. For if we consult with 2 Cor. 17. there we shall see the Apostle wonderfully affected with the joy that he had by seeing the good effect of his former *Epistle* upon them; for thereby they did set upon Church-order, they purged out the old leaven, they manifested much godly sorrow, indignation and zeal, and every way endeavoured to approve themselves unto *Paul*, and this did so exceedingly rejoyce him, that he saith, Vers. 4. *Great is my glorying of you, I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyfull in all our tribulation*. In the midst of all his troubles this rejoyced his heart, that they did themselves assist to the casting out of wicked persons, and were exceeding sorrowfull for their former negligence herein. Thus then, when a people are ready to observe all the Orders, and Institutions of Christ, this is matter of great joy. But because many Churches have received but half Christ, as it were; hence also their Ministers have received but half joy: Some Protestant Churches received the Doctrine of Christ, but not the Discipline: Some were for Orthodoxy in judgment, but not purity in lives; Some were willing to cast off the Antichristian yoke, but then would not submit to the rod of Christ: And by this means many faithfull Pastors have gone to the grave with great grief of heart. Oh it is a sad thing when people are so willfull, as to necessitate a Minister to remove from them, because they will not receive the whole Order of Christ, so that he is limited in his Ministerial Administrations, and cannot do all he desireth. Thus these *Corinthians* failed also about holy Order, in reference to the Lords Supper, which maketh him begin his discourse about it after this manner, *Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not*, 1 Cor. 11. 22. There are many other particulars, which rejoyce a Faithfull Minister, as when they continue

from



from not falling off from the truth, either by false Teachers, or afflictions, (which is so great a matter, that the Apostle saith, 1 Thes. 3. 8. *We live, if ye stand fast in the Lord*) likewise, when they are a growing people, and do not continue as babes, but are carried unto perfection, and do not stand still, but walk in the truth, *John 14. I have no greater joy, than to see my children walk in the truth,* so 2 Epist. Ver. 4.

Lastly, When they live in accord and Love: when they think the same things, and speak the same things, *Phil. 2. 2. Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like minded, and let nothing be done through strife, and vain glory:* But these may suffice.

*Use of Instruction:* How much it lieth a people upon so to live, and so to walk, that they may *rejoyce the Ministers of God:* To take heed of that ignorance, of that Impiety and wickedness which may grieve them; and so they shall give an account with heaviness, and not with joy, at the great Day. Though for the present these things are a fable, or a scorne to thee, yet remember, all the Sermons and Admonitions thou hast had, all the pains and studies taken for the Salvation of thy soul, will one day witness against thee. This will make us with sadness and trembling to think what account can we give of such persons at that great Day: we that have prayed for you, preached to you, mourned for you, must then be your Accusers; we cannot help it: The Lord will require your souls at our hands, and then must we say, *O Lord, such a sinner, and such a sinner, we have reprov'd him, we have declared thy will to him, but he would have his lusts though he were damned for them, he regardeth his sinnes more than heaven, and eternal life.* Let us conclude all with that sad and serious place; and oh that it might never out of your heart, but be with you sitting and walking, rising and going to bed, *Heb. 13. 17. Obey them that rule over you, and submit your selves, &c.* In which Text is much excellent matter, but I shall touch at it onely. First, There is the *Sanction and establishment of a Ministry and Pastors over a people;* For they are commanded to *obey such.* Where are they then that cry down a ministry, think it needless, at least no Institution of Christ? Secondly, Here is established the *dignity of Ministers,* partly by their Titles, *ἐπισκοποι,* they are *Guides, Leaders,* such as are set over you; and partly in the *duty* enjoyned the people, which is to *obey, and submit.* The first signifieth *obedience,* the other *reverence and submission,* so that they are to yield to the wholesome Counsels of their Pastors, and that with honor to them. 3. Here is the office of a Pastor to *watch for the peoples soules,* so that, if the Honor tempt, here is the Duty and danger which may deterr. 4. There is the *duty* of the people, as you heard, to *obey and submit.* 5. Here is a Reason of it, *They are to give an account of your soules;* we are Stewards, and to see that one sheep be not lost. So that the Ministers office is more dangerous, because he must account for himself and many others also; which made *Chrysostome* wonder, if any Guide or Officer of a Church could be saved; but that he speaketh, saith *Estius,* because of the many evil and negligent ones; otherwise, such as *Chrysostome* himself would be saved. Neither is this Text to discourage good and Faithfull Pastors, but rather to comfort them, because God will, in a special manner be with them, and blest their Labours. Now the Apostle sheweth, that this is a special means to discourage them, if by their wickedness people so walk, as that they shall render their account with grief. For certainly, if the more they have converted, the greater their accidental joy will be, then the more are damned (though not by their fault) the greater will their grief be. And that we might not think it a light matter thus to discourage and grieve a Minister, either in his Pastoral labours for their soules, (as some relate the words) or when, at the day of Judgment, he is to give an account (as others) he addeth, *this is not profitable to you,* that is, you will finde the loss of this, you will smart for it; God will reward them for their Labours, though ye be damned. Thus God will be avenged for your ingratitude herein. But what people think of these things?





## SERM. CIV.

## Of the great changes that will be in the Day of Christs coming.

2 COR. I. 14.

*In the day of the Lord Jesus.*

**W**E now come to consider the time, when this mutual *rejoycing* of Paul, and the Corinthians in one another, will be most remarkable, and that is said to be, *In the day of the Lord Jesus*. For although he speaketh in the present tense, *We are, and you are our rejoycing*; yet that is chiefly to be referred to the *last day*. It is true, for the present he had much joy in them, and they in him; but this was as the *gleaning* in respect of the *Harvest* afterwards. *Beza*, because the Apostle saith *εὐφρανόμεθα*, *we are*, and not *εὐφρανόμεθα*, *we shall be*, doth render it not *in die*, but *ad diem*; as if the sense were, *You are kept to be our rejoycing against that day*.

In what sense, Paul is called the *Corinthians joy* or *boast*, you have heard, viz. instrumentally, not principally. Therefore *Estius* stretcheth too farre, more than ordinarily he useth to do; when from that expression used by Paul to the *Thessalonians*, 1 *Thess.* 2. 20. *Ye are our glory and joy*; he would justify their practice in *Popery*, who in their prayers call the *Virgin Mary*, *their life, and hope*. For notwithstanding all their subtil distinctions, that is to derogate from the *Mediatorship* of Christ.

But to our purpose. This *rejoycing in one another*, is chiefly to be put forth at the day of Christ. And if you ask, *How can we then rejoyce in any thing, but God only? Is not the blessednesse of Heaven described by this, that we see God, that we enjoy him? So that to rejoyce in any thing else besides God, seemeth to be like desiring a candle, when we have the light of the Sunne*. How can a Minister for example rejoyce, in the conversion of such and such persons, when he hath an infinite object of joy, even God himself to delight in? Can any thing be added to that which is infinite?

To this it is answered, that there is an *essential* and an *accidental* joy in Heaven. The *essential* one lieth in beholding the face of God to all eternity, and this cannot be increased or diminished: But then there is an *accidental* joy, which ariseth from particular occasions or motives; and though Heaven and eternal happiness doth not consist in this, yet it doth accidentally make us to rejoyce in more things. Thus the *Angels*, though they do see the face of God, and thereby are compleatly happy, yet they are said, *To rejoyce upon the conversion of a sinner*. And thus the faithful Pastors of Gods Church, the more have been converted by their spiritual labours, the greater will their joy accidentally be. Not that this degree of joy or glory is merited by any, as some have thought: for this also is of the meer gift of God.

The



The time when this solemn rejoycing shall be, is said to be *the day of the Lord Jesus*; and as some Copies have it, *Of our Lord Jesus*. It is usual in Scripture to call *the day of the Lord*, that wherein he doth work some great mercy and deliverance for his people, or that wherein he doth inflict some eminent and famous judgements upon the enemies of his Church. So that there is *the day of his mercy*, and *the day of his judgement*. Now because of the end of the world, then *Christ* will in a full and compleat manner recompence his people, and punish all the ungodly; therefore that is in a more remarkable manner called, *The day of Christ*. It is true, there are some learned men, that besides the day of *Christs* first coming, which was not to destroy, but save; and the day of his second coming, they make a middle one, and that is the day wherein God did punish the *Jews*, and utterly destroy the Temple and City, bringing wrath upon them to the full for their crucifying of *Christ*, and their other finnes. And of this they would understand our Saviours discourse, *Matth. 24.* and in many other places, where they are commanded to watch, and to pray, or to be patient and joyfull, because *the day of the Lord is at hand*. That day (say they) when God would destroy Jerusalem, and deliver the believing Jews from the unbelieving and persecuting ones. Thus *Grotius* the late Annotator, &c. But because this is to go against the common roade of Interpreters, we must not have some specious colours, but strong reasons to make us depart from the beaten way. To be sure here, as in many other places, by the day of *Christ* is meant that last day of his, when he shall come as a King and Judge, to give to every one according to his wayes. From whence observe,

*That Christ hath a solemn day, wherein wonderfull and great changes will be made.*

*Christ hath a solemn day, wherein great changes will be made.*

Though for the present *Paul's* joy, and the *Corinthians* in one another, was not very conspicuous and glorious; yet at that solemn day, then this glory would be no longer eclipsed, but break forth in a marvellous manner.

Concerning this day, that there is such an one, as also the properties of it, elsewhere is spoken of, in a Sermon on *Act. 17. 31.* and I shall not therefore meddle in that. My work shall be to instance in some of those remarkable changes, which this solemn day will then make, and how we are to live in reference thereunto. And

First, Let us take up that for which the Apostle mentioneth it here in the Text, *There will be an happy, and a glorious change, as to the comforts of a godly Minister, and a converted people.* Oh the unpeakable gladness of heart that then shall be! When the Minister shall see the success of his labour; when he shall be able to say, *Behold my five have gained ten: Behold I, and the children whom thou hast given me.* These are the redeemed ones from the bondage of sinne and Satan; and then the Lord shall give that comfortable acclamation, *Well done good and faithfull servant, enter thou into thy Masters joy*, *Matth. 25. 23.* Oh what tongue can expresse, what heart can conceive, the joy that such a Minister shall have! This day, I say this day, may make him despise all the reproaches, all the injuries and contumelies that wicked men shall put upon him, while they call thee such and such names. Harken to those titles, *Come thou good and faithfull servant.* The thoughts also of this day would exceedingly quicken us up in our studies, in our ministerial labours, so to preach, so to study, so to watch over your souls, as those that have this solemn day in their hearts. Again, this day will make a wonderfull change, as to a godly people: How shall they then rejoyce in that Minister, and in those Sermons which have been powerfull to convert them, and to bring them to that place of glory? Their hearts will then be enlarged: Oh blessed be God, blessed be the time that ever you were a Pastor

1. There will be a great change, as to the comforts of a godly Minister and people.



stor to us, that ever such and such a Sermon was preached ! When you shall see a blind Minister, and a blind people both going to hell together, and you delivered, and that by such a Ministry you enjoyed in your life time : This will fill your hearts up with your rejoycing. Though now a faithfull Minister and godly people in their Church-ways may meet with much opposition, much difficulty and discouragement ; yet *lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh*. How pleasant will it be when you are come to the haven, to think of the dangerous storms and tempests you were once in ? But this day will make as great, but a sad change, as to all wicked men, who have been as weeds in Gods garden, who though watered and tilled, yet bring forth no fruit. Oh the terrour of this day to you ! Though now no Sermon moveth thee ; thou sittest and sleepest while Gods word is preached ; though now thou goest from the Assemblies to thy sports and pleasures of sinne, and there is no more matter made of it : But wo, and a thousand times woe to thee at this day of Christ, when we Ministers, and you people shall be brought face to face ; then we shall be your accusers, then every Sermon will accuse you, then every Lords-day will rise up, and witness against you. Oh be not so sottish as to think, all things will continue as they do ! Remember there is a day that will make the most prophane, the proudest, and the most stupid hearer to be awakened.

2. A great change in the prophane sinners.

Secondly, At that day *there will be a mighty change upon the prophane man wallowing in his sins, and following the pleasures thereof*. Then he that pleaseth himself in these lusts, will call to the mountains to cover him, and hide him from the presence of God. What a difference will there be between the man priding himself in his sinfull wayes, and when he shall hear that sentence pronounced against him, *Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels* ? In which sentence every word almost is terrible, *Depart from me* ; they must be separated from God, who is the fountain of life and joy. Chrysostome thought this privative part more terrible than the positive. *To depart from God*, never to have his favor, is worse than those eternal scorching flames of hell. What if for the present such persons of honour and greatness bid thee come to them, if God shall bid thee *depart from him* ? Oh remember, when sin bids thee come, when the world bids thee come, one day God will bid thee *depart* ! Again, that title and property given to such forlorn damned men is terrible, *yea cursed, cursed by God*, and who then can *blesse* ? *Cursed* ] How much better, if thou hadst never bin born, then to be in the number of these *cursed* ones ? What if now thou blestest thy self, and others blest thee, thou wilt then be pronounced *cursed* ? Further, the place into which they must *depart*, is terrible beyond all expression, *into fire, and everlasting fire*. *Fire* ] Is not that most dreadfull ? Do not your hearts ake and tremble ? Do not your ears tingle at the naming of this punishment ? But if it be *fire*, it may be quickly over, the pain may be presently gone, it may quickly consume to ashes. No, it is *everlasting fire* ; after thousands and millions of years, it is still the same, as hot to burn as at the first moment. If God had said, thou shalt lie roaring in hell flames till a thousand years are over, for such and such a sinne not repented of, might not this have prevailed with every man, to leave the most pleasant, and the most profitable sinne that is ? How much more when it is *everlasting*, when there is no end ? Oh the change thou wilt then find upon thy self ! Then thou wilt cry out saying, Was my hours pleasure, my moments profit equal to these eternal torments ? Now say, Whether it is better to sinne, then to be damned ? Are thy lusts equivalent to all the torments of hell ? Lastly, That is no little aggravation, *Prepared for the Devil and his Angels* ] You see what companions you must have : As much as you now desire the Devil, you and he must lie down in the same flames. The Devils will have no worse place than thou hast. Now if this be so, What a mighty alteration is here made ? The man that like *Dives* fared deliciously every day, would have a drop of water to

cool



cool his tongue, and cannot. Oh that the Spirit of God would convince and assure you of these things! Say, now I am merry, proud, confident: Now I follow my lusts, my pleasures; but will not the day of judgement then make a *change*? Will not there be a sad difference between my present estate, and that then?

Thirdly, *As to the godly man there will be a most happy and blessed change.* To see a *Lazarus* wiping his sores, taken up into *Abraham's* bosom: What a blessed change is here? The godly man hath his exercises from many considerations. The world derideth and opposeth him; afflictions from God crush him, and press him down: The Devil because he shall not have an hell hereafter, laboureth he may have an hell here; and from within, there are lusts, there are molesting motions to sinne, which make him cry out, *Oh miserable man that I am!* But when this day shall come, what man, though he had the tongue of Angels, is able to declare his happiness? This man that was scorned, is now blessed, and honoured by all the wicked damned ones of the world. Now they cry, Oh that our case were like his! Oh that our souls were as his shall be! Now the Devil is trampled under feet, and thrown into the *Abyss*, into the deep, where he was so unwilling to go, to receive the full of his torments. Now the spiritual warre within, is put to a period, and he doth all the good, in as perfect and full a manner as he can desire to do; his will and his power have the same bounds; he can do what he would, and he can will all that God would have him to will. We read of blessed changes in this world, of *Joseph* from a poor prisoner in the dungeon, and in danger of his life, to be exalted in the highest place of honour in *Egypt*, next to *Pharaoh* himself. Of *Mordechai*, who was designed to death, and immediately made the man whom God would honour. Of *David*, from following the sheep, and afterwards driven as a Bird from the mountain, to be made a great King. Yet none of these come up in the least manner to this great change. Hence it is called, *The day of redemption*, *Matth. 24. The day of refreshing and restoring of all things*, *Act. 3. 19.* (for we must not limit that time to the destruction of the *Jews* only, as some do) Yea the godly are to look for, and hasten his coming, *2 Pet. 3. 12.* as being the marriage time between Christ and his Church, *Therefore the Spirit and the bride say, Come*, *Revel. 22. 17.* It is for want of a lively meditation about this, that the godly at any time sink under any temptations. Is there any evil thou art exercised with, that this day will not deliver thee from? Is it not a day of redemption, never to be in bondage any more, either to sinne or misery? Especially the Church under afflictions and persecutions, is to fetch all her comfort from thence: God will turn her sackcloth into robes of honour, her dungeons into heavenly mansions. Should not then the Church sit expecting his victorious coming more affectionately, then *Sisera's* mother, *Judg. 5. 28.* did his return? saying, *Why is his chariot so long a coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?* *Luther* speaking of this hopefull expectation that ought to be in the godly of Christ's coming, endeavoured to affect his hearers from the condition they were in at that time. The Popish party did triumph over the Reformed, boasting, That *Cesar* was coming with a great Army, that he would presently and speedily vanquish all the *Lutherans*. Now (saith he) as you see they rejoyce, and fill themselves with hopes of the Emperours coming, so should the Church under all her pressures with the coming of Christ.

Fourthly, *There will be a mighty change, as to mens judgements and apprehensions over what they have now.* There is never a wicked man would for an hour go on in his sins, if he could have such thoughts, as he will have at that day. Oh that we could look upon sinne, as we will then look upon it! when God shall bid us *Depart into everlasting fire*. And certainly, if part of that terrour did work so much upon *Judas*, that he throweth away his silver, crieth out, *He had sin-*

3. A great change to the godly.

4. A great change in mens judgements and apprehensions of sinne and holiness.



ned in betraying of innocent blood. No wonder if when all the gall of Gods wrath be poured into a mans conscience, he then crieth out of his sins, gnasheth the teeth at them, remembreth them with horreur, which were once so full of sweetness and delight. Go on then presumptuously thou prophane wretch, believe no Scripture, deride at all good counsel: Say, Give me my sins, though I be damned; yet remember this perswasion will not hold alwayes, there will come a day when thou wilt as much loath and abhorre these lusts, as ever once thou didst love them. Oh that men could now behold their sins with that horreur and indignation, as they will when they shall stand trembling at Gods tribunal. Again, men will have other thoughts, 1. About the *ways of Godlinesse*. 2. About *Godly men*. And, 3. About *Christ*. For false principles and mis-judging about these, is that which maketh so many damn themselves.

To begin with the first, about *Godlinesse*; they think it is an hinderance to man; if he were not so just and conscionable, he might swallow down many a sweet morsel which he lets go. Thus men are ready to think they fare the worse for godliness. Oh but when thou shalt see, what that Heaven, what that glory and happiness is, which at that day godliness will give thee full possession of, how quickly will thy thoughts alter? Then thou wilt cry out, Oh it is a mans riches to be godly, it is a mans wisdom to be godly, a mans profit to be godly, though he did thereby lose all this present world!

Again, We are prejudiced against *Godlinesse*, because it is not in honour and repute. None of the great men, of the wise men, do much regard it: Men of great estates and birth, think godliness below their greatness; that it is a dishonour, a stain to their reputation to walk precisely and singularly to the wicked course of the world. But in this also that day will make a mighty change; when you shall see, that then godliness is only enquired after. Then the Question will be, How hast thou lived? How hast thou kept thy self unspotted from sinne? Then thou wouldst give thousands of worlds for *godlinesse*. That holiness and purity thou now laughest at, it will at that day be only in request. At that day there is no difference between Kings and peasants, between the noble and base, between the rich and poor; but either wicked or godly, sheep or goats, that maketh all the distinction. If *Alexander* plead, he conquered the world: If *Cressus* plead the multitude of riches: If one saith, he is an Emperour, another he is a Nobleman, a Gentleman, these are absurd pleas at that day. Art thou a godly, an holy man? This only will carry it. Oh then remember, you will have other thoughts of *godlinesse*, than now you have! It will be more in request and honourable esteem, than now it is. Whosoever he be that doth evil, though the great Potentates of the world, the Judge will then say, *Depart, I know you not*.

Lastly, We are prejudiced against *Godlinesse*, because we think it is too strict, it requireth too much of us: It will not allow us those pleasures and delights we might have. Oh but at that day, such a thought will presently vanish; all the labour of my life thou wilt say, is not worthy to one minute of this glory; could I have been a Martyr every day, it would not have been equivalent to this present happiness!





## SERM. CV.

*A further Discovery of the great Changes that will be wrought at the Day of Christ's second coming.*

2 COR. I. 14.

*In the day of the Lord Jesus.*

**A**T this great day (you heard) there would be a wonderfull change upon the thoughts and perswasions of men, to what they are now. It is not so much, what thy affections and apprehensions are for the present, but what they be at that day. Especially in three things this Change will be seen,

1. About Godlinesse, which hath been dispatched.
2. About Good men.
3. About Christ.

There will be a great change in wicked mens thoughts

We come therefore to the second, and that is the wonderfull change that wicked men shall then have in reference to those who live godly, and dare not conforme themselves to the course of this world.

2. Of good men, as

As First, Such who separate themselves from the evil wayes of the world, They are matter of reproach and scorne; They are judged the fooles, and the simple ones, by all that live near them; But at that day, you will have other thoughts, you will then admire their happinesse, call your selves the fools and deluded ones, wishing that it might fare so with you, as it doth with them. It is said of those noble Worthies, Heb. 11. 38. That they had tryal of cruel mockings. Yea David, though a King, Psal. 69. 12. complaineth, He was the song of the drunkards. Thus you see what thoughts men of the world have of such who fear God; as Michal did David, They despise them in their heart. But oh the wonderfull alteration that day will cause, when thou shalt see those who were despised by thee, honoured by God: Those whom thou didst reproach, to be blessed by God: What a confusion will this be to thee? Then you will cry out, We fools and mad men, judged their wayes folly and matter of scorn; but with what unspeakable glory doth God honour them?

1. That they are fools.

Secondly, Another false perswasion they have about godly men, is, That they are Hypocrites, that all they do is not out of love to God, but for ostentation sake. That it is not the glory of God, but their own glory and advantage, that they seek after. Paul was so often charged with corrupt ends in his Ministry, that he is compelled to make his Apologetical Defence to clear himself. Yea Christ himself was judged by the Pharisees to be an Impostor, and that he came of himself, doing his own will, and seeking

2. Hypocrites.



ing his own glory, which made him so earnestly deny it, *John 6. 38. John 8. 50.* This is a sore evil upon the sonnes of men, that because they have an enmity and hatred against the godly, yet they cannot put this forth upon godlinesse, as godlinesse, therefore they represent the godly in such colours, and lay such things to their charge, that they may seeme to have just cause to vent their malice against them. But at that day their sincerity and integrity will appear; then all the world shall see, that their hearts were upright, their aimes and intentions sincere; that what reproofe, what holy endeavours they used for the recovering of men out from their sinnes, was not out of hatred, or any other ill principle, as wicked men are now apt to judge, but out of pure love and desire for their soules good. Let not then evil and ungodly men, take upon them to judge the hearts of others, that is the prerogative of God alone; neither doe thou judge before the great day of judgement. Take heed of calling such *Hypocrites* and *dissemblers*; of calling such *Pharisaical* and *conceited*, whom it may be God will own at that day, for his jewels, for his faithfull ones. If there be any *Judas*, who followeth Christ because of the *Bagge*; If there be any who believe in Christ, yet love the glory of men more than of God, they shall beare their burden. The portion of Hypocrites in Hell, is a double portion: But let not all the Apostles be censured for a *Judas*; Let not all be judged Hypocrites, because he was so. Remember that this day is a revelation of all things: all the hidden purposes and counsels of mens hearts shall then be made manifest. The Apostle giveth this exhortation to such as judged him, *1 Corinth. 4. 5.* he sheweth them, how little he regarded mans judgement, for it is the Lord that judgeth. Therefore they are not to judge any thing before the time, untill the Lord come, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of mens hearts, and then shall every man have praise of God. Is not this a full place, to make thee afraid of all censures and hard speeches against such who professe godlinesse, Let them alone to the Lord; there is a day, when all the thoughts of their hearts, all the purposes and intentions of the soule in holy duties shall be made manifest; it shall then be discovered, who was faithfull, and who was insincere, and wilt thou anticipate this day? Little doest thou thinke how much such as feare God in truth, doe bewaile that partial hypocrisie and insincerity which is within them; how greatly they feare, lest they should deceive themselves, and doe holy duties for false ends, and not out of pure respect to God himselfe; Such then shall have praise of God, and their integrity manifested before Angels and men.

3. In respect to their outward estate.

Thirdly, There will be a change of mens thoughts as to the godly, *In respect of their external estate and condition.* They have for the most part the evil things of the world, when the wicked enjoy the glorious things thereof. Are not afflictions, troubles and miseries, as inseparably following the people of God, as the shadow doth the body? Doth not our Saviour fore-warn his Disciples of the great trouble that they shall meet with in the world? Doth not *Paul* himself say, *1 Corinth. 15. 19. If we have hope in this life onely, we are of all men most miserable? Of all men* Because other men will follow the pleasures and profits of the world: Other men will suck out the honey that is to be had in the creatures; They will escape all misery and persecution, by becoming any thing in Religion, and thereby save themselves out of danger; but as for the godly they are as sheep appointed for the slaughter all the day long: Their tender conscience, and feare to sinne against God, putteth them into many losses and disadventa-



diſadvantages, which the men of the world can imbrace. Now it being thus with them, this doth exceedingly prejudice men againſt godly men. Their outward condition is many times dangerous; they ſeeme to be caſt off even by God himſelfe, as if he did not love them, or owne them for his; and this keepeth off many from walking in the pathes of holineſſe. If the applauſe, honour, and great things of the world did accompany the power of godlineſſe, then all would ſtrive to enter in at ſuch a broad gate; but becauſe it is with them, as with Chriſt, they appeare with no external glory and lovelineſſe upon them. Hence it is that of all men they will not owne ſuch, or joyne to ſuch. But this great day will make you have other thoughts of their condition; when you ſhall ſee their ſackcloth taken off, and robes of honour put upon them; when you ſhall ſee theſe *Lazaruſſes* with no more ſores on them, or deſiring crummes from the Table, but placed in *Abraham's* boſome. This will make you then to wiſh, Oh that we had endured the ſame hardſhip, gone through the ſame wilderneſſe, ſeeing they have now arrived at ſuch a bleſſed Land, as they are!

In the third and laſt place, *The thoughts and apprehenſions of men about Chriſt, will be greatly changed at that day, from what they have at preſent; in two particulars eſpecially,*

First, *When Chriſt is offered now to us, and we may be made partakers of him, yet we reſuſe him, we will not receive him, we had rather have our luſts than Chriſt; we love father, mother, and life it ſelfe, more than Chriſt. Such low thoughts have we of him now: But oh the time is coming, when Chriſt, and onely Chriſt will be in requeſt! At that day he is happy who ſhall have an intereſt in Chriſt. Thoſe *Gadarens* that intreated Chriſt to depart out of their coaſts, regarding their hoggs more than he; with what confuſion will they behold him at that day? We ſhall then ſee there is good reaſon for that Doctrine, *He that loveth father, more than me: or he that loveth life it ſelf more than me, is not worthy of me*, Matth. 10. 37. For happily fleſh and blood may for the preſent ſay, *This is an hard ſaying, who can beare it?* To love Chriſt more than father that begat me, and maintaineth me; from whom happily I may expect great and large gifts: Or better than life, which is above all earthly mercies. Will Chriſt be as good as theſe to me? Shall I not loſe by loving him more than theſe? But if a man conſider what Chriſt is? How he will appeare at that day? How happy are they who can claime an intereſt in him? Then they will ſee reaſon, why Chriſt ſhould be preferred above all. Now we are for *Barabbas* rather than Chriſt: Now Chriſt knocketh at the door to come in, and we will not open to him: But who is there then that would not cry out, Oh let Chriſt juſtifie me, let him ſanctifie me, let him ſave me! Thus the ſtone that is now reſuſed, will be the head corner-ſtone.*

Secondly, *Many deceive themſelves in their thoughts about Chriſt, apprehending onely love and willingneſſe in him to ſave. They never thinke of Chriſt, but as a Saviour: Though never ſo polluted by ſinne, yet they call him, their good Saviour, their bleſſed Saviour; but at this day, thou wilt then have other thoughts: Thou wilt then ſee, he can damne as well ſave; he can be a Lion as well as a Lambe. This mercifull Saviour will be a ſevere and juſt Judge. Thus (Revelat. 6. 16, 17.) you have the great men, and rich men of the earth, hiding themſelves in Dens, and calling to the *Mountaines and Rockes* to fall upon them, and bide them from the wrath of the *Lambe*, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who ſhall be able to ſtand? Thus you ſee, that your thoughts about Chriſt at that day, will be*

3. Their thoughts will be changed as to Chriſt.

1. They will then behold him the chief-eſt good.

2. As a Judge, as well as a Saviour.



be wholly changed : You that thinke onely of mercy, that speak onely of mercy, that look onely upon Christ as a Saviour : What trembling will this be to you, when you shall see him come as a Judge with ten thousand of Angels, when you shall heare him pronounce his terrible sentence upon ungodly men, then how will your hearts melt within you ? Then you will beginne to say within your selves, Oh that we had not made an Idol-Christ, that we had not fancied a Christ to our selves ! This is not such a Christ as we looked for ! This is not such a Christ as we expected ! Even as the *Jewes* looked for another *Messiah*, then was indeed to come, which proved their destruction : So also many doe fancy to themselves such a Saviour, made up onely of mercy at that great day. And therefore whereas they promise to themselves peace, they will meet with hor- rour and desolation. And thus much for those particulars. The next ge- neral Proposition is,

There will be at the great day a great change as to Gods provi- dence.

*That there will be a wonderfull change upon mens thoughts in reference to Gods dispensations, and his providence in this world.*

Gods proceedings here below have beene the subject of many *Heathens* disputes. Yea *David* and *Jeremiah* were ready to stagger and fall with the consideration of Gods various dealings in this world; especially that particular went deep into them, why God should let the wicked live in all prosperity, and at hearts ease, and in the meane while, the godly goe bowed downe, not able to lift up their heads ? Now this Question will never be fully answered, till that great day; and therefore it is called, *The day of restoring of all things*, Acts 3. 21. which word signifieth, that here in this world many things seeme to be out of order; it is ill with a god- ly man, well with a wicked man; but then God will put every one in his proper place : The wicked shall be, where he ought to be, and the godly where he is to be. Then we shall no longer cry out, *How unsearchable are his wayes, and past finding out* ? For then God will cleare all his pro- ceedings which have been in this world. Then we shall know, why this was so, and that so : Why God did help at such a time, and not before. Then all the proceedings of God, whether in a way of judgement or mer- cy that doe astonish us, shall be opened; all the wisdom, goodnesse and righteousnesse of God shall then be manifested to the whole world. Thue we shall see a wonderfull alteration.

The next Proposition, and last shall be this,

Lastly, There will be a spe- cial change made upon some sinners, as the jolly, se- cret and self- righteous.

*At that day there will be a vast and unspeakable change made upon some sinners especially.*

Though we told you all *sinners* would have other thoughts, and looke upon themselves in another manner than they doe now; yet to some sinners this day will bring a remarkable, but a terrible alteration. As

First, *The rich and jolly sinner*, who liveth in all manner of pleasures without any molestation at all : Here will be a dreadfull change to him, to goe from his down-bed to the flames in Hell : To be fetched from his merry companions, to be for ever tormented by the Devils. The Parable of *Dives* and *Lazarus*, Luke 16. 20. doth egregiously demonstrate this; *Dives* is taken from his delicate fare, and great abundance, plunged in such a want of all mercies, that he cannot have one drop of water, to assuage his torment. *Abraham* also telleth of his change, vers. 25. Remember that thou



*thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, but now thou art tormented* What thunder and lightning should this be to every such jolly sinner? Why dost thou not say to thy self, now thou art jolly and merry; but will this hold alwayes, will there never be any change?

Secondly, *The secret close sinner*, he who carrieth himself in all plausible wayes of piety, but then continueth in private secret finnes; Now this day will especially be for the bringing to light all such hidden wayes of dishonesty. *Solomon* concludeth his Booke with this, *Eccles. 12. 14. God will bring every secret thing to light, whether good or evil.* This day will be a terrible day for all such as hide, and keep close their finnes: There is nothing done in secret but will then be made manifest to the whole world. How terrible will this day be to the secret uncleane person, to the secret thief, to the secret unjust man? Know to thy terrour at that day, they will be no more secret. As they say of letters written with some juyce, they cannot be read till they be brought to the fire, and then what was hardly discernable, is very legible: Thus it will be at that day; The finnes no man knoweth by thee, those evil wayes the world cannot charge upon thee, will then be made known to all.

Lastly, *All Pharisaical and self-righteous persons*, all those who are strongly perswaded of their good condition, but upon false grounds: This will be very terrible to such. Many men live so prophanely, and die so wickedly, that they cannot but expect damnation, they must looke for no other: but there is a generation of persons (Oh how many of them!) that doe applaud themselves in their own good hearts: They doubt not of Gods favour; they conclude, whensoever they die, it shall be well with them. To such as these there will be a dreadfull change. What thou that didst not doubt, or feare thy condition, no not to the last gaspe to fall from these great hopes into eternal despair, What a change is here made? Our Saviour did most fully represent such persons in the Parable of the *foolish Virgins*, *Matth. 25. 11, 12.* Did not they goe out confidently to meet the bridegroom? Did not they cry boldly, Lord, Lord, open to us? And yet when they came to the last, they wanted oile. Oh the multitude of those persons who want oile, yet live confidently, and die confidently, making no question, but that the Lord will open to let them in! So in another Parable in the same Chapter, *vers. 44.* Those persons whom the Judge shall bid *Depart into everlasting fire*, for the omission of such duties, as were required of them; They stand and plead with the Judge, they will not believe themselves such sinners; They will not grant they ever offended so, *When saw we thee an hungry, and fed thee not, &c?* Oh take heed of this selfe-fulnesse, of living and dying in such strong presumptions of Gods love, for hell and damnation will be so much the more terrible, by how much thou didst make sure of Heaven in thy owne expectation.

The Use from this Doctrine must needs be full of power and efficacy to move us. Imagine a wicked man sentenced at that Tribunal, taking his leave of all comforts, wishing he had never been borne, crying out to the mountaines and hills to cover him, and then say, Did this man once believe it would be thus with him? Did this man ever thinke there would be such a change? Now is it not Gods mercy to fore-warne thee of this day? Neither Devil, or the world, neither God or man can be accused, but thy owne wilfulnesse in sinning. When thou art commanded to depart into everlasting fire, never to enjoy a drop of comfort more, How must thou justifie God, the Ministers, and thy owne godly friends, ta-  
king



king confusion to thy self? Shall we not heare thee speaking to God, O glorious and infinite God, thou hast beene mercifull and patient to mee! Thou gavest me time to repent! Thou didst fore-warne of this torment! I must justifie thee! Then we shall heare him speaking to Christ, Oh blessed and glorious Mediatour, though not so to me, How great was thy love in dying for sinners? How much was I convinced, that it was my duty to depart from my sinnes, but my lusts would not let me? Afterwards he shall justifie the *Ministers* and godly friends, How often was I admonished? I remember what you said to me; I was convinced, I had no reason to doe as I did, it was my owne rebellious heart that hath undone me.

Lastly, He speaketh to the *glorified Saints*, Oh happy and thrice happy are ye! How unspeakably glorious and comfortable is your condition? I remember the holy life, the godly examples you gave me, but my wretched lusts would not let me follow you, and now I must see your faces no more. Farewell all joy, all comfort; brimstone, fire, torments, and hell flames are to be my portion for ever! Where is thy reason? Where is thy faith that doth not make thee watch and pray against this day? Why dost thou not with *Hierome* thinke that every moment thou hearest that Trumpet sounding in thy eares, *Arise, and come to judgement*? Oh be diligent in doing the worke of the Lord: *For blessed is that servant whom his Master shall finde him so doing!* Whereas if thou art doing the Devils worke, he will at that day come and demand thee, he is mine, I challenge him for my owne; though I never died for him, though I was never crucified for him, yet he obeyed me rather than Christ; therefore I require my owne. Call then to any of the creatures, and thy friends, and see if they can helpe thee; when God shall say, *Depart ye cursed*: Will any say, Lord, he shall not goe, I will deliver him, I will rescue him, I will make an atonement for him? No, but he must for ever perish, and none can help him.

---

SERM.

---



S E R M. CVI.

*Of the Encouragements a Minister hath from the hopes of doing good to a people.*

2 COR. I. 15.

*And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that you might have a second benefit.*

**A**T this Verse the Apostle taketh an happy occasion for a transition to his Apology, or defence against that crime charged upon him, by the false Teachers; *Non saltat*, saith *Cajetan*, he doth not leap, falling upon this matter abruptly, but the transition is very genuine. *Paul*, it seemeth, had promised to come to those *Corinthians*, but for weighty reasons he deferred his coming hitherto. The false Teachers, they waiting for all advantages to calumniate him, did upon this accuse him with levity and inconstancy, that with him was yea and nay, that he did purpose according to carnal respects, accommodating himself to time, and outward advantages. Now the Apostle is very zealous and vehement in vindicating of himself herein. It is true, *Piscator* doth begin this Apologetical Discourse at the 12th Ver. but it seemeth more genuine to make the beginning of it at this verse. *Estius* doth well observe, that while *Paul* was speaking in the commendation and praise of his Conversation, he did use the plural number, joyning others with him, to avoid envy; but when he cometh to this Apologetical part, being charged with a heynous crime, he useth the singular Number, and speaketh of himself onely.

In the words we may take notice :

First, *Of Pauls Resolution.*

2. The *Motive* of it.

3. The *Time*.

4. The *End*:

And 5. *The Manner*, how it was to be executed.

In the Verse following his *Resolution* is set down in these words: *I was minded to come unto you*; ἐβόλων, it signifieth such a *Resolution*, and purpose, that was made upon good advice and deliberation; It was not a rash, suddain, or presumptuous Decree, but made upon good grounds, though afterwards he had cause to change his minde. From this word βέβαιος, some say the word *Bulla* is derived, as being his wise decree and purpose; but seldome is there either wisdom or righteousness therein.

2. There is the *motive* in this confidence, viz. which was mentioned before of their mutual rejoycing in one another, whereby he was perswaded, that he might do much good amongst them: we have spoken of the word already. This he speaketh, to shew that the motive of his coming to them was wholly out of love and desire to do them good.

3. The *Time* when, and that is, *πρὸ τούτου*, before, some make it a trajection, as if it did belong to his mind and purpose, he had before determined others to his

R r r

coming



coming to him, as if this coming should have been long before; but there is no great matter in either construction, though *Beza* and *Grotius* go the former way. If you say, Did the Apostle then change his mind? did he alter his purpose? if so, would not this call in question all his Apostolical Doctrine? To this we are to answer in the prosecution of his Apology at the 23<sup>d</sup> verse; he there plainly telleth them what was the cause that made him forbear his coming, not any levity or inconstancy in him, but their sinfulness: It was, that he might not execute that Apostolical severity amongst them, as they deserved, of which, in its time.

Lastly, There is the *End* of his coming, which is wholly spiritual, *That you might have a second benefit*; It was for their good, not his own. Let us consider the Motive in this confidence, of your kindness and love, as also, of my doing good to you. I purposed to come to you.

Observe;

Where a Faithfull Minister hath hopes of doing good, he hath good encouragement to remain.

That where a Faithfull Minister hath good hopes and confidence of doing good to a people, there is great encouragement of abiding with such.

Thus it was with these very *Corinthians*: God, in a Vision to *Paul*, *Act. 18. 10.* command'd him to stay at *Corinth*, and not be afraid, which he did a year and half, longer then usually he did any where; and the reason is, Because there was much people in that City to be gathered to God. Oh how rejoicing is it to a Faithfull Minister, when he seeeth God hath converting work, edifying work for him to do amongst such a people? Thus you have also *Paul* resolved upon his tarrying at *Ephesus*, *1 Cor. 16. 9.* and why so? *A great and effectual door is opened to me.* He did see a likelihood of much spiritual good to be done, and this made him willing to abide there. To affect our hearts with this truth, consider,

1. All people naturally have a door bolted against Christ.

First, *That all people, both by nature and custome have a door fast bolted against the entrance of the Word.* So that, it is as great a miracle, for Christ, by the preaching of the Gospel to enter into the hearts of Hearers, as it was, when he came in to his Disciples, the doors being shut; yea here is a door upon a door, a bolt upon a bolt. There is first their native corruption, and by this they are dead in sin; So that our Preaching is like hooting into the ear of a dead man, should not the spirit of God change and prepare the hearts of Hearers. This is the inward door; and then there is an outward door, which is Custome and Continuance in sinning, and this also hardeneth against the Ministry. Therefore people are to tremble under this contrariety to their own spiritual good. Remember, that as you have a door shut now against the Gospel, so God will one day have a door shut against you in the Kingdome of Heaven: so that, although you shall cry *Lord, Lord, open to us*, yet it cannot be granted you, *Luke 13, 25.* As much intreating as we make to you now to receive the Lord Christ, so much will you one day use that Christ would receive you. Now we knock, and cry, and importune that you open the doors of your heart; and then you shall howl and cry to Christ to open the doors and gates of Heaven.

2. 'Tis the grace of God alone that can open this door.

Secondly, *Because men are thus shut up against the Word; hence it is, that neither any tractableness, or supposed probity in any people, nor the admirable gifts, and efficacious parts of a Ministry: but the powerfull grace of God alone is that which doth open the doors of mens hearts.* Not any tractableness in people. therefore the *Socinian*, and *Arminian* Doctrine is with indignation to be excluded, who speak of a *probitas naturalis*, and *ingenium docile*; a natural teachableness in some persons, which doth prepare them for the Gospel, and that is the reason why some are converted by the word, and not others: yea, they are not afraid to offer violence to that Text; which doth so evidently

witness



witness against them, *Act. 13. 48. As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.* The word, *ἐκζητήσαντες*, they would wrest to signify some inward Disposition, and Qualification, men that had fitted themselves: But certainly, If God so often tell the *Israelites*, that he gave them not that rich Land of *Canaan* because of their Righteousness, or, for that they were better than others; can we think Heaven and Salvation, which was typified by that *Canaan*, shall be obtained by our own worth? Nay, experience tell us, that sometimes the most prophane have received the Gospel, when others more civilized and moralized have been great enemies to it. If any have Humility and Meekness, which is necessary for the success of the Gospel, in his heart, that is the gift of God, it floweth not from nature. Neither Secondly, is it any thing in the excellent gifts of any men, though they could preach with the tongue of Angels. Though the Apostles were designed by Christ to be leaven to leaven the whole World, to be salt to season all people, yet too many here as the favour of death; and some were the more enraged, and made more obstinate in sin, by how much the more affectionate he was to do them good. Yet the Ministry, though of itself it cannot roll away this stone, or open this door of mens hearts, is not therefore useles: God hath appointed to convert by it. We must not out of Pride refuse to wash in this *Jordan*, as *Naaman* at first did, thinking other waters as good; I mean, to think, that staying at home, and reading of good Books, is as profitable; because this is to neglect the instituted means by God; and it is just, that it thou do not seek God, where he is to be found, that thou shalt never finde him there where thou seekest him. Though this be so, yet it is God that openeth the door of mens hearts; *Paul* said, *An effectual door was opened*, in a passive fear: he doth not say, I have opened it. Hence Christ speaketh from heaven to the Church of *Philadelphia*, *Rev. 3. 7, 8. I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.* When Christ will open the hearts of people, as he did *Lydia's* all the rage and violence of the Devil cannot hinder it. How many men are wrought upon, that, of all in the world you would not have expected it? who would have thought such bears should be turned into sheep? Thus God sometimes continueth a Ministry to a people, which doth a world of good: when there are many persecutors, many enemies, men that have used all their fraud and power to remove it, and could not any more stirr it, then they could mountains. While God hath converting or saving work to do by a Minister, though it be but for one soul, though all the rest should maliciously conspire against him, yet they do imagine things in vain. Observe that I place already mentioned, *1 Cor. 16. 9. An effectual door was opened, and there were many Adversaries.* There was a large door opened for all that. It is true, we have that Expression even in the same Chapter, *Rev. 3. 20. Behold I stand at the door and knock, and if any man open unto me, &c.* But that place onely implyeth our duty, what we are bound to do, not our ability. He that knocketh must also open the door, although the will is not forced in this, but God hath insuperable power over it, whereby he can make it of unwilling willing.

3. It may fall out sometimes that God calleth a man to preach to a people concerning whom there is none or little hope of doing any good. Now such who are thus called must continue in their station, obeying the will of God, though they see they labour in vain. This was *Isaies* case, *Ch. 6. when he is commanded by his preaching to make the eyes of the people blinde, their hearts heavy.* It was also *Ezekiels* case, *Ch. 3. 7. But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee, for they will not hearken unto me, for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard hearted, so Ch. 2. 7. Thou shalt speak my words to them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.* Thus a Minister, lawfully called to a people, must not presently think of departing from them, because of the little hope that he hath to do good, but must patiently and constantly wait upon the Lord in his way. The case of a Ministers removal

3. Sometimes Ministers are called to a people of small hopes.



from a people is of great difficulty and tenderneſs: The cauſes of his departure may be either *Internal*, which God onely knoweth; as, Whether it be a pure Zeal to Gods glory, or ſome carnal and ſiniſter reſpect: or *External*, and thoſe *externally* may be either by ſome powerfull and cogent Providence of God, as ſome think, in the Plague; or perſonal Perſecution of the Miniſter, or by the command of Superiours, or for want of Maintenance, or where he cannot have his health; or by a voluntary diſmiſſion of the people; or Laſtly, when there is a manifeſt Oppoſition generally againſt the Miniſtry, ſo that the madneſs and malice of the people force him away. Thus our Saviour commandeth, *Matth. 10. 14. Whoſoever ſhall not receive you, when ye depart out of that city, ſhake off the duſt of the feet*: Thereby to ſignifie, ſay ſome, ſo God would at laſt caſt off ſuch a people, with as much abhorrency, as we do the duſt of our feet: or elſe, thereby to declare, that all the labour and pains they had been at, ſhould one day give in Teſtimony againſt them. Thus we read *Act. 13. 21. Paul and Barnabas ſhook off the duſt off their feet againſt the perſecuting and unbelieving Jews*. And Verſe 46. *Paul ſpeaketh boldly to them, Seeing ye put the word of God from you, and judge your ſelves unworthy of Eternall life, lo we turn to the Gentiles*. Thus You ſee there may be weighty Cauſes of a Miniſters Removeal. For they are two rigid, who think the Union between Paſtor and people is indiſſoluble, like that of marriage: Yet among all the Cauſes, nothing is ſo clear, as when a when a people, by their wickedneſs and Oppoſition do perſecute and drive him away; or when they are too refractory to the Orders of Chriſt, that he cannot with a good conſcience exerciſe all Miniſterial duties amongſt them. But, though this be ſo, The frowardneſs and unprofitableneſs of a people muſt not immediately make them take up ſuch Reſolutions; they muſt ſhew much Conſtancy and ſelf-denial, uſing all means to recover them. For ſeeing it is God that giveth the encrease, though we plant and water, and his time is unknown to us, it may fall out, that a people, who give no hope for the preſent, may afterwards appear more curable; and the ſeed that is now ſown, thow for the preſent it may ſeem buried, yet afterwards it may grow up. Therefore we are to imitate God himſelf, who uſeth much Patience and Forbearance even to the vileſt men, thereby to allure them to Repentance. This counſel alſo *Paul* giveth *Timothy*, as a Miniſter of the Goſpel, *2 Tim. 2. 25. In meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe, if peradventure God will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the truth*. Though then hopes of doing good to a people is a great Encouragement to co continue with them, yet a people that appear incurable for the preſent, are not to be immediately abandoned, becauſe the times of ſucceſs are in Gods hand; and ſometimes Perſecutors are at laſt made Lovers, and imbracers of the truth. Beſides, we ſee the Prophet quieting his heart with this, though he had no ſucceſs in his Miniſtry, that he had his reward with God, *Iſay 49. 5. Though Iſrael be not gathered, yet ſhall I be glorious in the eyes of God*. Such as are deſpiſed and contemned in the eyes of men, ſhall be glorious in the eyes of God.

4. A Miniſters hope of doing good ſhould be guided by the Word.

4. This confidence, and hope of doing good muſt not depend upon a mans own apprehenſions, but muſt be guided by the word of God. So deceitfull and corrupt is the heart of a man, that many times it flattereth it ſelf, and when a man ſeeketh his own advantage, yet he may perſwade himſelf, that it is confidence, and hope of doing good, Therefore to know when there is more hope of doing good in one place than in another, muſt not be decided by ſelfiſh and private deſires, but by general Rules fetched out of Gods Word, and indeed, becauſe all ſucceſs of Miniſterial Labours lyeth wholly upon the good Grace of God, and the Word is bleſſed ſometimes to one people, not ſo likely; and at another time not to a people more likely. Therefore the will of God is very difficultly diſcovered in ſuch caſes; which ſheweth, with how much ſincerity and fervency God



God is to be sought unto at such times. Now the Reasons are palpable, *Why Confidence in a Minister to do good to a people should be a matter not only of continuance, but of studying, and diligent improving all his Ministerial Labours with the greater joy.*

First, Because *the End of his Ministry is hereby accomplished.* When the Disciples had fished all the day, and caught nothing, they were disheartened; but when Christ bid them throw the net in again, and they brought up a multitude, this made them rejoyce, even to amazement. If the Husbandman is at much cost and pains about his ground, and that bring forth nothing but bryars and thornes, Is not that a disheartening? If a Physician see that no Potions, no Medicines he giveth, ever do any good, will not that make him weary of his imployment? How much more, if a Minister labour in vain, Preach in vain, Admonish in vain, and still people grow more obdurate in their sinnes? Doth not this teach them, with *Jonah*, even to run from their work?

Secondly, *There is great matter of rejoycing where this hope is, because Success in the Ministry is above all Successes.* Herein the Souls of men are concerned. In this is contained our everlasting Happiness. Oh that men should be no more sollicitous in this than they are. How few do examine what fruit the Word preached hath upon them; whether it be a sustaining Word, or an hardening; Whether it be the favour of life, or the favour of death? That Ark which brought so much blessing to *Obedmelech*; and his Family; to the *Philistines* was cause of grievous Plagues. And thus the same Sermons that are life to one, may be darkness to others; that are light to one, may be darkness to another. If then the Minister shall see his work like to prosper in the end it is sent for, here is greater cause to rejoyce, then in any outward blessing whatsoever; for this is of everlasting consequence.

Let the Use be of *Exhortation* to you to be a people of good Confidence, that our Ministeriall Labours shall not be in vain; That we do not in vain preach to you, or pray for you. Can there be a greater grief to the Minister, yea and provocation of God, than to be like that ground the Scripture speaketh of, *Heb. 6.8? Which drinking in rain often, yet bringing forth nothing but bryars and thornes, is rejected; and whose end is to be burned.* And is not this the sad case of most of those trees that stand in the Lords Garden? Do not many grow more ignorant, more prophane, more hardened? Oh what hope can a Minister have about such a man? May we not see sad symptomes of Gods wrath upon your soules? many such desperate Patients have the spiritual Physicians of mens soules to deal with. But take heed of shewing thy self an hopeles man to a faithfull Minister, one to whom no admonition, no reproof, will ever do good. For,

First, *Those sighs and troubles that thou puttest such spiritual Guides unto are in a speciall manner taken notice of by God.* It is true, we see *Jeremiah* so grieved, and offended sometimes at the wicked carriage of the people he prophesied unto, that he prayeth against his persecutors; yea God commanded him, saying, *Pray not for this people for their good, Jerem. 14. 11.* But we have not an extraordinary Spirit; neither dare we pray against any hopeles people; yet remember, all their sighs, all their grief will one day witness against thee. Certainly, if the ears of God be open to the Curses of an hired Man, whose wages are kept from him, how much more will God hear the sad complaints of those Ministers who are faithfull, poured out because of a peoples rebellion, and incurableness?

2. Consider this, That *your discouraging them by your evil wayes maketh them the more unfit and heartless in their studies and Labours.* Why doth rain fall on the rock, say they? Why do we wash blackamoors? and so some

Reasons why  
a Ministers  
hope of doing  
good should  
be matter of  
joy to him.  
1. The End of  
his Ministry is  
accomplished.



some expound that place, *Heb. 13. 17.* *That they may give their account with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you,* in this sense, by grieving and disheartening of them, they cannot be so active in their Ministry, they will grow more heartless therein, and that will be your damage. Oh its a terrible thing, when this heaviness and dulness of a Minister ariseth from the discouragements he hath from the wicked lives of a people: and therefore *Calvin* upon that place speaketh excellently, That people should take notice of God punishing them for their ingratitude. When their Ministers abate in zealous and lively watching over their soules, we are apt many times to complain of such a dull and liveless Ministry; yet how little do people think, that many times they give the cause, so that its Gods punishment upon them, in that very thing: yea, though Ministers be never so faithfull and godly, yet as *Calvin* observeth, they cannot go on in their Ministerial work with that vigor and alacrity they ought to do, when their hearts are bound up with sorrow and discouragements about their people. All cannot attain to *Pauls* excellency, who could have enlarged bowells to that people, who had streightened ones towards him.



## S E R M. CVII.

*Of the Necessity of a constant Ministry,  
not only for the constituting, but to an establishing  
the Church.*

2 COR. I. 15.

*That you might have a second benefit.*

**I**N these words we have the End of *Pauls* purpose to come to them: It was wholly spiritual. It was not for any advantage, any earthly respects, but but wholly for their good, to encrease and confirm their graces. The End is expressed in these words, *That ye might have a second benefit: χαρις*, which some, as *Chrysostome*, interpret, for *χαρά*; yea their are some who would have that to be the word in the Original. It is no doubt, but that much *χαρά*, or joy did follow upon this *χαρις*. All spiritual effects and heavenly exercises are apt to breed much joy. Hence none have true joy but those that are godly, and so by consequence none are blessed but they; for Joy is a great ingredient to Happines. Hence *Aristotle* maketh *μαχαρίσθαι* to come of *μολυσσά* and *χαίρειν*, exceedingly to rejoyce; yet is more consonant to other places of Scripture, to read it *χαρις*, thus *Rom. I. 11.* He desired to see them, that he might impart to them some spiritual benefit. The word *χαρις* is chiefly used in the New Testament for the free grace of God towards us, in reference to our Eternal Happines: so that, the very name ought to be sweet and precious to such, who labour under the sense of their unworthiness, and see no power or works of their own any wayes able to save them. It is of grace, therefore that doth not onely exclude merit, but supposeth thee unworthy for such mercies of thy own self. It is  
sometimes



Sometimes in Scripture applied to such Almes as were freely given for the use of distressed Churches, 2 Cor. 8. which is therefore called *Grace*, partly because it is of Gods special goodness to give us such a free and liberal Disposition, as the first Verse in that Chapter implyeth, *I do you to wit (saith Paul) of the grace of God bestowed on the Churches of Macedonia*: and that was to be liberal to the other afflicted Saints: and partly because it cometh from the bountifull disposition of a man to such as are in want. In this Text it is to be applied to *spiritual bounty*, that is, to be willing and ready in all serviceableness to promote the spirituall good of others; for there are spiritual almes, as well as temporal, which lieth in reproof, in Admonition, and frequent Exhortation to what is good. Now this Grace or Benefit is said to be *iterated*, which some translate, *iterated*, and *repeated*, though it be more than the Second, or third time. Chrysostome referreth it to his Epistles, and his presence: for by both these he communicated *spiritual benefit* unto them. But it is most probably and generally referred to his first and second coming: whether Paul did come a third time to those *Corinthians* is disputed by Commentators, because of some passages in the 12 and 13 Chapters of this Epistle: of which in its time. It is enough, that by the first *grace* or *benefit*, we mean the first work upon them by Pauls Ministry, when they were converted from their Paganism, and planted a Church of Christ. And the second benefit was, to confirm them in the same Faith, and also to quicken them up unto further degrees of Holiness: and this was the second Benefit Paul desired to impart unto them. For it appeareth, that though this Church of *Corinth* was a garden planted by Paul, yet many weeds, and some poysonous ones began to grow up amongst them; There were both in Doctrine and Manners many things amiss, which needed Pauls presence to reforme. Observe

*That it is not enough to be a Church planted, and gathered from out of the world at first, but there needeth a constant and dayly Ministry to be tilling and dressing of it.*

A constant Ministry is necessary to every Church.

That Garden which God planted, and put Adam into, yet was to be dayly dressed; and so it is still with the best Churches, even those that are of the Apostolical Plantation, yet needed the Apostles care and diligent visitations, which was one main cause of writing those several Epistles to several Churches. They were not written to convert them, or make them Churches, but to admonish, instruct, or confirm and comfort, as occasion did require; and upon this ground it is, that though the office of Apostles and Prophets, as also the gift of miracles are now ceased, because the Church is now planted, yet the office of Pastors, and the Ordinances Christ hath instituted, are perpetual, and must be continued to the end of the world. So that the opinion of the Socinians about the Ministry, as it were, only a thing of order, and not of Divine Institution, is grossly repugnant to Gods Word; as also their Doctrine about Baptism, That it was but a temporary Ceremony, instituted for the beginning of the Church, is full of falshood. Churches though constituted, yet must be dayly watered: neither is it enough for a people once to be brought home to the Faith, but they need a second and a third, yea a continual benefit. For though the Apostle haply did come but the second time to these *Corinthians*, yet he appointed Officers in an ordinary residence amongst them, as wel as in other Churches, which were continually to watch over them.

The particulars wherein the Ministry is necessary for perfecting work, as well as foundation work, for progress as well as ingress, for consummation as well as imitation, are these;

First, To inform against those Errors which false Teachers do easily insinuate into

And that for these Ends  
1. To inform against Errors.



into the hearts of people. No sooner hath God sowed his field with precious wheat, but the envious one commeth, and soweth his tares. As the April showers, that make grafs and flowers to come, cause also weeds to grow: Thus at the same time God is building the Church, the Devil and his instruments are raising their *Babel*. No sooner have the Ministers of God with *Isaac* digged up Wells, but the *Philistines* have been ready to throw their earth and mud therein. If then Errors and damnable Heresies may so quickly infect a Church, formerly pure; no wonder if there be such necessity of Pastors, and Guides, who are to lead the people into all truth by their Ministry, as the spirit of God doth by his efficacy. You may observe in most of *Pauls* Epistles, which are like watering of the Garden, after it is planted, How much care and inspection is used against those false Teachers? how greatly he labours to antidote them against false Doctrines: so that, it is a wonder, that any who read *Pauls* Epistles, and observe his diligence and zeal therein, can look upon Errors as almost innocency, and deserving pitty rather than indulgence. *Gal. 1.6. I marvel you are so soon removed from him that called you, to another Gospel, &c. So soon, Those Galatians that had received such wonderfull gifts by the Preaching of the Gospel, yet even to the admiration of Paul are suddenly carried aside into false wayes. This then is a continual benefit by a faithfull and sound Ministry, that we be not as Children, tossed up and down with every winde of Doctrine, Ephes. 4.14. That we be soundly fortified against all the deceiveable wayes of Errors; and truly this is a special mercy, to have a Ministry sanctified to that end, and blessed to that purpose, to keep thee in a sound and right judgment. Therefore is it that the Devil placeth his engines against the Ministry, to batter that down: for, if the wall be broken down, the city may be easily taken: if the hedg be trampled down, the corne will presently be spoyled.*

2. To reform  
the corruptions  
that are in  
mens lives.

Secondly, *Ministerial labours are necessary to a constituted Church, in respect of all the effectual means it is to use against those corruptions, and abuses in mens manners which may soon break forth.* And thus it was with this Church of *Corinth*; Their lives were greatly corrupted, there were many disorders, They did not walk with such an holly respect to the Rule as they ought to do: some fell into gross finnes of wantonness, and had not yet repented, or manifested any true humiliation; others they were carried away with pride and envy, whereby many parties and Factions were made amongst them. Now, where there were so many diseases did they not need a Physician? when the School was thus disordered was not a rod requisite? Although the Churches of God have glorious Titles, yet they seldome exactly answer to them in their lives. They are called *Believers*, but how apt to misbelieve, to be carried away with the slyly cunning of heretical men? They are called *Saints*, but how apt to be carnal, passionate, worldly; yea and sometimes to be overtaken with grosser finnes? Now they that are thus overtaken, do they not need those that are spiritual *Gal. 6.1. to restore them again?* By the *spiritual* here some understand the Officers and Guides of the Church, who, as they were to cast out obstinate and impenitent sinners, so to receive them again upon their humiliation, in the spirit of meekness, to Church-communion.

3. To comfort  
the godly.

Thirdly, *Ministerial Labors are necessary in an iterated and repeated manner, for consolation and encouragement.* The people of God have a twofold occasion of their sadness and discouragement; the former whereof is, from their finnes and faillings; they are wholly strangers to their own hearts, but discover that vileness and loathsomeness in themselves, which the world can not, which God onely knoweth; and sometimes this fire is enraged by the oyl that the Devil poureth on, he hath his fiery darts, he hath his buffetings. Now, when any of the children of God sit in this darkness, how necessary, how welcome are the feet of those who bring the glad tydings of the Gospel! Had not even Christ himself, in the midst of his sorrow an *Angel* sent to comfort him? The Incestuous person, was not he ready



ready to be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow, and therefore *Paul* exhorteth the *Corinthians*, 2 Cor. 2. 7. *to forgive him, and to comfort him.* Hence God doth reprove those negligent shepherds, *Ezek.* 34. 4. that grossly failed in this duty, *The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, or bound up that which was broken.* For this end also God doth give his Officers a tongue of the learned, as the Prophet *Isay* calleth it, Chap. 50. 4. which is, *to speak a word in season, to him that is of an humble spirit, and wearied soul.* Little do any know the necessity of such comfortable Physicians, but such who like the man of *Jorcho* lie wounded with the sense of their own guilt, and Gods displeasure against them. For alas, in our temptations we are not able to give true comfort to our selves, it is well if we be enabled through grace to receive it from others. In muddied waters a man cannot discern his own face; so neither in such black temptations is a Christian able to see how it standeth between God and his own soul. Therefore as the Spirit of God doth efficiently both convince of sin and comfort, so doth the Ministry instrumentally, being applyed therunto by the Spirit of God. A Second occasion of comfort, is in regard of the outward persecutions and troubles which do accompany the powerfull Profession of the Gospel: so that, in respect of external considerations, they are of all men most miserable; Are not they therefore to have such as may comfort and strengthen them in their warfare? Hence *Pauls* Epistles do abound with many consolations, as so many cordials: *Peter* also in his Epistles doth give notable encouragements not to faint under the afflictions they meet with for the Gospels sake; yea to joyce in it, and to account themselves happy because of it. This comfort is alwayes necessary; but because the Godly are never free from the persecution of the hand, or of the tongue, the Ministers of God, they are to follow Christ in this: as he informed his Disciples of the hatred they should meet with in the world, so he comforteth them, he commands them to be of good courage, he had overcome the world.

Fourthly, *The labour of the Ministry is again and again to be put forth to a people, though under the profession of Christ; because of their growth and edification in the wayes of holiness.* And this indeed is one of the principal effects of the Ministry upon a people already converted. They that say or think they need no Ministry, no Preaching, may with that *Novatian* take a ladder, and go themselves up into heaven. It is as if a Graden should say, it needeth no rain; a field of corn, it needeth not the clouds, to be without which, is in Scripture, a great judgment. This God threateneth, *Isay* chap. 6. 6. *I will also command my clouds to rain no more rain upon it.* Thus some men wilfully put themselves into that condition, to live without a Ministry, as a Mercy, which God maketh a grievous Curse. That growth in Christianity is a principal end of the Ministry appeareth *Ephes.* 4. 12. *For the perfecting of the Saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we come to a full stature.* Insomuch that all Ministers and all hearers have work enough to do. None can say, we have Preached enough, or heard enough, because none believe enough, none love enough, none are heavenly enough.

Several wayes the best Hearers may grow;

First, *In the amplitude of their knowledg.* They may know more things in Christianity than they did: for seeing *we know but in part*, 1 Cor. 13. this light in our mind may still encrease more and more; not indeed in more necessities and Fundamentals, for then none could be saved, because still ignorant of some Fundamental or other; but in the Additionalls and Superstructures, which have also a special use and efficacy to carry on the work of Salvation. Even a Godly man may live in many Errors, in many sinnes, and not know them to be so; as we see in many Ages, when clearer light hath discovered that to be Superstition, and a dishonour to God, which was accounted once the great honour due unto him. When God dispelled the *Egyptian* darkness of Popery from of the face of the

4. To edifie and strengthen them.

How believers may and are to grow.

1. In knowledg.



the face of the Church, their Image-Worship, their Indulgences, their vowed Obedience and poverty, which were admired as such eminent acts of Religion, were manifested to be contemptible, as having no foundation upon the Scripture, and also very injurious to the Offices of Christ; and in how many things do the best of men still continue ignorant? and therefore with *David* (though he had *more understanding than his teachers*) are to pray, that *God would open their eyes, that they might understand the wonderful things of Gods law*, *Psal. 119. 18.* *Dauids eyes were opened, yet they must be opened more; all the scales are not fallen from his eyes: and therefore the Apostle prayeth for those Ephesians whose understandings were already enlightened, Ephes. 1. 17. that their eyes might yet be more opened: and that God would give unto them the spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of him.*

2. In the experimental power of their knowledge.

2. By the Ministry they are to grow in the efficacy and experimental power of their knowledge. For these two differ exceedingly; men may grow much in speculative knowledge, understand controversies in Divinity, and dispute much about the Doctrines of the times that are agitated; but unless a man grow in the savoury power of it, he is but a tinkling cymbal: if he do not grow in the love of the truth, if that knowledge doth not make him more pure, more sanctified, more reformed, this will turn to his greater condemnation. Therefore *Tit. 1. 1.* It is called *the acknowledging of the truth, which is after godliness.* *Savonarola, Hom. 3. p. 29.* bringeth a distinction of Divinity out of *Aquinas* to this purpose, *a man may know a thing, saith he, either per modum studii, or per modum inclinationis: men may know many things by way of study in Divinity, and yet not have the least knowledge of them by way of inclination to love and delight in them. May not a man have obtained much discursive knowledge about Christ, in respect of his Person and Offices, as to be able to confute Arrians and Socinians, yet be far from that heavenly inclination which Paul found in himself, to know nothing but Christ crucified, and to judge all things dung and dross in comparison of this knowledge? That knowledge then which doth bring a savoury taste, and experimental inclination to the good things we know, that is to be embraced, that we are to grow in more every day. He that knoweth a Country or a City by a Map, cannot be so affected as he that hath really seen it.*

3. In Faith

3. We may by the Ministry have a continued benefit in respect of the firmness and strength of our faith. It is noted sometimes of the Disciples, that upon some miracle that was wrought by our Saviour, that then they believed. Not but that they did so before, onely their Faith was then more strengthened, and confirmed; and truly this firmness of Faith, this steadfastness of it, is a precious Antidote against all fickle and sceptical Opinions: Men do not grow in Faith but fancy; and that maketh inconstancy in Religion. How can a man be a Martyr for Christs truth? how can he lose all he hath, rather than deny it, unless he have this quieting and satisfying work of Faith upon the soul? Hence Faith is called, *Heb. 11. 1.* *The substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.* Those two words *substance* and *evidence* do denote the great power that Faith ought to have upon the soul. Again, this firmness of Faith is not onely seen in dogmatical Assent, but in in fiducial Application of the Promises to our selves, in which sense it is said twice or thrice, *The just shall live by his faith.* Such are the weak actings of our Faith, so strong are our temptations, so supernatural and mysterious is this way of believing, that all have cause to cry out with the Apostles, *Lord increase our faith.*

4. In Grace.

Lastly, *The best hearers need the Ministry for increase in Godliness, so grow in grace more.* Thus the Apostle, writing to those whom he supposeth as converted already, yet exhorteth to put off the old man, and put on the new. *To be renewed in the spirit of their minds, Epes. 4. 23. 24.* And our Saviour prayeth for the Apostles even in that Prayer wherein he acknowledgeth that they had believed, and



and received the word of God. That *they were not of the world*, John 17. 17. That God would *sanctify them by his word*, which is to be understood of the progress therein. There is no Doctrine so practically opposite to the Scripture as that of Perfection; for every where the Godly are commanded to *grow*, to *be mortifying the body of sin*, to *be perfecting holiness*; which were ridiculous Exhortations, if we had already attained Perfection. Hence we are compared to those who run in a race, and therefore till death, do not come to our prize. Thus where the Minister may have little to do in respect of Conversion, it may have very much to do in respect of Edification. And the Godly are to Examine, whether every Sabbath day the Minister doth not come with a new benefit, a new advantage to them: look for a new grace and favour in every new Sermon. And so we proceed to the Use, which is, of Instruction,

What all people should look at under the Ministry; Spiritual advantages, spiritual light, spiritual heat, spiritual quickenings. As where Christ went up and down he healed their diseased people, so where the word of God is preached, it should heal soul-diseases. Thou art not to have the Pride, the passions, the worldly cares as thou usest to have: but, oh how rare are such Hearers! who aimeth at this? who prayeth for this in every Sermon he heareth? Oh fear least some spiritual judgment upon thee deprive thee of this benefit. If an *Israelite* had looked upon the *Brazen serpent*, and yet not be healed: If a diseased person had stepped first in order into the Pool of *Bethesda*, and yet not have been recovered; they would have been greatly troubled to see their hopes frustrated. No less ought it to make thee grieve and tremble, if thou finde that one Sermon passeth away after another, yet there is no spiritual benefit accruing to thy soul thereby. But why do we speak of *spiritual Edification*? in how many is not the ground-work of Conversion laid? how can they have the *second benefit*, who have not obtained the first? How can they be nourished and grow, who have not yet the Principles of Life infused into them?

Two great things are then to be done by our Ministry through the grace of God.

The First is, *To Regenerate*:

The Second is, *To grow and increase* in the work of Grace.

If the foundation stone of this building be not laid, thou art yet in thy ruins and rubbish, thou art yet in thy sinnes: Thou art to pray, and to desire all others to pray, that God would have mercy upon thy soul, that he would take away thy stony heart, that he would heal thy blinde eyes, and open thy deaf eares. But if God hath brought thee into this spiritual estate, know there is a necessity to grow in grace, as well as to be in grace: and, that for progress herein God hath appointed his Ministry, and the Ordinances. Cry out then and say, Lord, not the First time, but the Second and Third, yet all my life long make me to partake of this Heavenly Benefit.





## SERM. CVIII.

*All Christians, especially Ministers, ought to lay out themselves wholly for Gods Glory, and others good.*

2 COR. I. 16.

*And to passe by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judea.*

**T**His Text containeth the manner how *Paul* was to fulfill his purpose of coming to them, which was first to go to *Macedonia*; and upon a short abiding there, then again, to come back to them, and to make a longer continuance with them. For the state of the Church of *Macedonia* was not so corrupt, as this of *Corinth*, and therefore needed not so long a residence of *Paul* there, as in this place. For our holy Apostle had his whole heart carried out in the service of God, and therefore did order his journeys and continuance in any place, according as Gods glory, and the advantage of the Church might require it. So that when *Paul* speaketh here of his travails, and setteth down as it were his several journeys, in all these he did not consult with flesh and blood, or look upon carnal advantages; but his aim in all is; to promote the Kingdom of Christ.

There is one great difficulty which Commentators are exercised with concerning this Text, and that is, How to reconcile this passage with that which is 1 Cor. 16. 5, 6, 7. where he saith, *He would come to them after he had passed through Macedonia, and that he would not now see them by the way, whereas here he saith, he will, though afterwards he would come and abide with them*: So that here seemeth to be a contrariety in his purposes. Some, as *Aquinas*, and others, think therefore that this purpose in the Text, was either made in a former Epistle, which is now lost, or sent by a messenger to them: And that afterwards *Paul* for urging reasons did alter his resolution. And that this is spoken of in the former Epistle, which they say is the second, though with us it be the first. Hence it's affirmed by some, that the Apostle wrote three Epistles to these *Corinthians*, though we have but two. But it is the judgement of the most able Divines, That no part of the Canonical Scripture is lost. They grant many books are now wanting, which some holy men did write, but of that which was by God appointed to be the Canon and Rule of our faith and manners none is perished. And indeed to hold that opinion, would open a door for many atheistical arguments; at least it would gratifie the Popish party, who thinketh, if there were no Scripture, yet the Church and her traditions would be a starre bright enough to guide us unto Heaven. Others there



there are that grant in the former Epistle *Paul* had a contrary resolution to this in the Text, and that it is no dishonour to him to change his mind; for they distinguish between matters of Doctrine, and matters of Fact. In matters of Doctrine they were alwayes guided by the Spirit of God: But in matters of Fact, sometimes they did purpose according to humane considerations, but prudential and rational; yet in the event were over-ruled to other things, then they purposed, by some new dispensations of Gods providence. Neither is this to be blamed, no not in wise men. For the Rule is, *Sapientis est mutare consilium*, new emergencies which the wisdom of man could not fore-see, may cause new resolutions. Now it's plain, that either *Paul* did wholly change his purpose, or else he did not fulfill it as soon as was expected by the *Corinthians*, which made them so calumniate him for inconstancy and levity. And this answer may very well be justified; yet *Musculus* doth at large shew; how both these purposes may be reconciled, and that there is no contrariety in them, which is too long here to insert.

Let us come to observe some practical and profitable instructions from this Text, and from the general scope that *Paul* had in all this labour and travail, which was to advance the glory of God, to promote the good of the Church, rejoycing like a Gyant to runne his race. We may observe,

*That it is the duty of all Christians, and especially of Ministers to lay out themselves for the glory of God, and good of others.*

'Tis the duty of all Christians, especially Ministers to lay out themselves for the glory of God.

Was not *Paul* admirable in this? See how he taketh one journey upon another, travaileth from one Church to another; and all this is, that Christ might be exalted. Both godly Christians and especially Ministers of the Gospel are to follow Christ in this, who went up and down preaching the Kingdome of God, and doing good whithersoever he came. All his life was spent in doing the will of the Lord.

First, Let us consider it as the duty of all *Christians* in their several places and relations; and herein these things are considerable.

1. For all Christians.

First, *There is none, though in never so mean a condition, but hath several talents committed to him, which are to be employed for the honour of God, and the good of others.* The known Parable of the Talents doth sufficiently confirm this. For though there be a great difference, some have five, and some have ten, and others but one or two, yet none are to sit idle: And therefore in that Parable, *Matth. 25. 24.* the instance of an unprofitable servant is made in him, who had but one Talent: we would have thought it would have gone worse with those who had more Talents; they were under many obligations, it would be very difficult to improve all. Doth not experience teach us, that where a man hath many relations, and several trusts committed to him, how hard it is to be faithfull in all? Yet here in this Parable, he only is found unprofitable, and is adjudged unto a terrible doom, that had but one talent, and was negligent therein. Would not Christ teach us by this, that none should slight their mean and low estate, thinking that such are poor and inconsiderable creatures, as they are, alas, they can do nothing for God? It is for Magistrates and Ministers, for rich men, or men in place, and of interest to lay out themselves; but God doth not look they should do any thing. Oh take heed of this temptation! If thou doest but set thy self to consider in this matter, thou mayest find thy self in capacity to promote the glory of God, and to further the Gospel of Christ in many particulars that thou art now negligent in. This is our great sinne, that none are contented with the several relations and conditions they are in. One thinketh, if he were in such a mans estate, he could serve God better than he doth.

1. There is none but have talents to be improved.



doth. The private Christian thinketh a Minister can do it better: A Minister thinketh a private Christian hath not the temptations and sad cases that he hath. As *Luther* speaketh (*Comment. in Gen. cap. 17.*) of himself, how he thought other mens callings happier than his, who endured so much envy and hatred for the Gospel, *They live without vexations; their labour is sweet, but I am exercised* (saith he) *with great dangers.* But we must take heed of impatency, and know we may all serve God, and so be at last saved in our respective lawfull callings. We would think the hands or feet were in a worse condition than the tongue, for they are worn out with labour; whereas the tongue doth taste of sweet and pleasant things, and is not wearied with pain, and yet these partake of the same happiness with the body, as the eyes or tongue do.

2. All lawfull actions may be improved for Gods glory.

Secondly, *This you also are to understand, that all the lawfull actions in your several callings may be improved for Gods honour, as well as those that are in their nature religious, and immediately applied to himself.* Our plowing and sowing, our marrying and bringing up of children, if done according to Scripture-rules, please God in their way, as well as religious duties: It may be holy plowing, holy sowing, holy buying and selling, as well as holy praying and holy preaching. It is the Apostles command, *1 Cor. 10. 31. Whether ye eat, or drinke, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* In Popery there was an horrible mistake about this, which was the cause of bringing in much superstition; which made *Luther*, as appeareth in his *Comments on Genesis*, so often speak of the good pleasure that God taketh in the civil actions of our calling, when done out of obedience to Gods command. And indeed men are hardly perswaded, that the doing of such things in our relations, are serving of God; whereas all such things done from good principles, and to right ends, are holiness as well as other duties. *Holinesse to the Lord*, is to be written upon all thy natural, civil and moral actions, as well as religious. It is true, here lieth the difficulty, to do these ordinary actions of our calling upon holy grounds; to eat, to drink, to labour, that God may be exalted, and not to make riches, gain, and outward blessedness the utmost end of all doings in this kind. So that till a man be regenerated, he is but a worm crawling upon the ground; he cannot do any thing but upon humane motives. And it is no wonder, for such men in all their religious duties are but carnal and earthly; whether they pray or heare, it is not for the glory of God: Custom, formality, and self-respects, are the Locusts and Caterpillars, that do devour our hopeful buds. Therefore

3. Christians should often meditate upon the ultimate end of all their actions.

In the third place, *It becometh every Christian often to meditate about the ultimate end of all his actions.* As the *Heathen* would have a man say to himself, *Cui bono, for what good is this I do?* So much more should believers proponnd this to themselves; I labour, I take pains, I rise early, I go to bed late; but to what end is all this? What is it that my soul doth principally aim at in all these things? If we had asked *Paul*, saying, *Paul, Why will you go to Macedonia?* He would have said, to promote Christs Kingdom, to have been beneficial to mens souls. And then again, *Why to Corinth?* It was to carry on the work of the Gospel there. Many did begin to fall off, so that it was necessary there should be information and admonition. And further, *Why do you go to Jerusalem?* It is to refresh the bowels of the poor Saints there. By which you see, that as the *Heliotropium*, that flower of the Sunne, doth follow the Sunne, and openeth and shutteth according to the presence of the Sun, and its absence. Thus doth the heart of *Paul* wholly move after God; divine considerations are the Loadstone that drew out his heart. And indeed in all moral actions, the end is first to be concluded. Hence *Aristotle* in his *Ethicks* beginneth with the end of humane actions. What is the white that all men are to shoot at? What is the mark they are to levell at? Whereupon some Divines likewise concluding, that Divinity is practi-



practical and not speculative merely, that therefore the most approved and genuine method in all Systems of Divinity, is, first to begin with that *end*, which all men ought to aim at in their whole life, and that is known to be the glory of God, and the salvation of our souls. Now when a man hath fixed his end, and resolveth upon that, he doth all things proportionably and suitably thereunto. Hence when a man acteth according to a Divine Rule: If you ask him, Why do you take such pains? Why do you ride up and down, and travail so much? Why do you study and devour books? His answer will be, It is for Gods glory, and the salvation of my soul. Till there ore a man hath centered his soul upon the right end, till his heart be constantly upon that, he either proponnds cursed and wicked ends to himself, or at the best he maketh intermedius ends ultimate, that which is the secondary to be the principal. For it's lawfull to take pains, to be diligent in our calling, that our family may be provided for, our children be brought up; it were an unnatural and great sinne to be negligent herein; but then you must remember, to make this a *comma*, not a *colon*: This must be your Inne, not your home, you must look beyond all these, even to God and your souls. This truth is so necessary, that though we should preach six hundred Sermons about it, to quicken you up in the meditation thereof, it would not be useles: But I am not now to insist upon it. The sum is this, He that would both in soul and body, in health, wealth, parts, and all he hath, be imployed for God, must often make this Question to his soul, Oh my soul, what is thy end in all these things! What moveth thee to be thus diligent in thy wayes? What is it that is set most upon thy heart all the day long? For although we cannot continually have actual thoughts upon our chief end, yet we are to have an habitual and virtual inclination, from whence all is to come, that we do. Even as a perfect *Grammarians* speaketh alwayes true Latine, from the habit within him, though happily he doth not actually think upon every rule in his *Grammar*.

In the next place we told you, *This acting and working for God in our whole life and callings, is more eminently to be fulfilled in the Ministers of the Gospel.* The name of a Bishop is a name of labour, and not honour. The Ministry is, *Negotiorum negotium*, the work of all works; which made Paul say, *Who is sufficient for these things?* 2 Cor. 2. 16. All the title and names they have, denote diligence, labour, sollicitude and constant perseverance in the work of the Lord against all the cruel oppositions that the Devil and wicked men do raise against them. Hence Timothy is commanded, *To endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*, 2 Tim. 2. 3, 4. and that he may discharge this faithfully, *He must not entangle himself in the affairs of the world.* All which sheweth, that in a peculiar manner they are by their Ministry to dispossess Satan of his Kingdom: They are clouds to refresh the dry ground, and to make it fruitfull. They are salt to season those who are corrupted by sinne. But you may say, *What qualification is requisite, that both private Christians and Ministers may lay themselves wholly out in their respective wayes for God?* For though Paul instance here only of his own travails, yet the end of this is general, and belongs not onely to all Ministers, but all Christians. We are to do in our way, what Paul did in his way: We may in the Apostles consider some things as commanded them in their proper personal capacity: Some things again as Ministers which belong to all Officers in the Church: Some things again as commanded them under the notion of believers. and what they do in such a capacity, we all are to imitate them in. It was not the Apostles duties only to watch and pray, to take heed their hearts be not overcharged with the cares of this world; to strive to enter in at the straight gate, but it is every believers duty; we have all the same end, though not the same way. What Paul aimed at, by preaching, by travelling from one Countrey to another, the very same thing art thou to aim at in thy buying

2. Especially it belongs to Ministers.



What is required to enable us to do all things for Gods glory.  
1 A converted soul.

2 A publick spirit.

3. Heavenly-mindedness.

4. Fervency and zeal.

buying and selling, in thy trading from one place to another.

Now amongst the several qualifications to enable us therunto, there is required,

1. *A renewed Nature.* We must be made *new creatures*, else the first stone is not yet laid in this foundation. *Paul* never was busie in this spiritual merchandizing for God, till he was converted; while some men have their lusts their god; others their god; others the world their god; others honour and greatness their god: They cannot but toil and moil, go farre and near, only to satisfie these spiritual Idols, that they worship in their hearts. Oh but when God shall make this iron to swim, shall convert this earth into fire, then he beginneth to improve that first Commandment, and to do all things in pursuance thereof, even to *have no other gods, but God alone.*

2. There is required a *publick Affection*, whereby we preferre Gods glory, and the spiritual good of others, above all our particular concerns. If *Paul* could even desire to be an *Anathema* for *Israel's* spiritual good, *Rom. 9. 3.* How much more then would he readily part with riches, honour, and his own ease to have procured it? When we read in prophane Histories, and see how much some of their Worthies have denied their profits, pleasures and lusts to promote the publick good, we may admire that publick spirit God gave them; yet *Austin* observeth truly, *That corrupt aims and ends did prevail in all they did.* How much more then may we behold the glorious work of Gods Spirit upon many Christians, in this very particular of giving them publick affections, that had rather with *Jonah* be cast into the Sea, then see the Church sink wherein they are? If it be our duty, *To lay down our lives for the brethren*, *1 Joh. 3. 16.* is it any wonder, if we do the lesse things for the good of others?

3. There must be *Heavenly mindedness.* Cold doth congregate heterogeneous things together; the Earth is an heavy element, and falleth downward. If therefore a man would be active and diligent for God and his Church, he must be of an heavenly frame; he must be able to say with *David*, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and in earth in comparison of thee?* *Psal. 73. 25.* As fire assimilateth all things into its self: Thus doth the godly man endeavour that all his relations may be godly, all his friends, all the world if it could be. Hence it is that every godly man, because of this heavenly affection, is in some measure, though not equal to *Paul*, to say, *2 Cor. 11. 28, 29.* *The care of all the Churches is upon me: who is weake, and I am not weake? Who is offended, and I burn not?* It is said to be a kind of proverbial speech in the primitive times, *If an elect (that is, a believer) hath sinned, his neighbour hath sinned;* implying the great care Christians took of one anothers soul, that if any did sinne, they were to consider whether other mens sins were not made theirs some way or other.

Lastly, *Fervency and zeal* is a choise ingredient in this precious ointment. If you observe who ever did much in their places for God, or his Church; you will find they were alwayes men of zeal. Hence *Rom. 12. 11.* you have those duties excellently put together, *Not slothfull in businesse, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.* Every Sacrifice must have this fire, that it may be offered up to God. It is the sluggard that hath this field grown over with briars and thornes; want of zeale maketh a man stand like an unprofitable tree, that cumbreth the ground. It was *Paul's* zeal made him do and suffer so much for the good of the Church. Thus zeal also will inflame thee, and make thy heart which naturally is like a cold stone within thee, to burn like fire; and then, as *Solomon* speaketh in another case, It is as impossible to keep in thy godlinesse, as to binde up the winde, or to conceal the ointment thou bearest about with thee. Zeal will make thee work for God, speak for God. These and the like qualifications will make us put this Doctrine

into



into daily practice, viz. To improve all we are, and all we have for Gods glory, and the good of others.

Let the Uſe be, To examine our ſelves in this point: Is all we do in reference to God? Doe we live and move to glorifie God? May we not charge our baſe and unworthy hearts with much lazineſſe, much formality, much worldlineſſe, whereby we are hindered from ſpending our ſelves, and being ſpent in his ſervice? Do we not live, as if we had no other buſineſſe in this world, then to eat and drinke, to buy and ſell? And yet againe, Who looketh upon himſelf as running in a race, and ſo will not give over till he come to the prize? And truly if wee but conſider the infinite comfort that is in doing of Gods worke, above the worlds, and the Devils; this would be a ſharpe goade in our ſides, to make us forward therein.



## S E R M, C I X.

*Of the Office of Apoſtle, and particular Paſtours; and of the Peoples eſteeme of their Miniſter.*

2 COR. I. 16.

*And to paſſe by you into Macedonia, and to come againe out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judea.*

**W**E proceed to a ſecond Obſervation from this relation made by *Paul* of the manner how he intended to perſorme his promiſe of viſiting of them. For it's plain, that *Paul* by this inſtance doth declare, that he had an univerſal commiſſion to overſee all thoſe Churches in ſeveral places and countreys which he had planted. And therefore in this particular his Office was diſtinct from ordinary Paſtours, which were appointed for particular Cities and Churches, who were to have their ordinary reſidence with them, and ſo were in a peculiar manner to give an account for their ſouls, as their proper charge. God then did not, or doth not require of ordinary Paſtours, that they ſhould like *Paul* travail from countrey to countrey for the propagating of the Goſpel, but in a diligent and faithfull manner to watch over their own flock at home. From whence obſerve,

*That the Office of an Apoſtle, and an ordinary Paſtor, were among other things diſtinguiſhed in this, that the one had an univerſal charge over all Churches; the other was limited to a particular flock.*

I ſay, [*Among other things*] for there were ſeveral particulars wherein

The office of the Apoſtle and ordinary Paſtors differs, in that the one had an univerſal, the other a particular charge.



Apostles and Pastors are diversified, as their *immediate call*, their *ocular testimony* and *witnesse of Christ*; their *power to work miracles*; their *infallibility in Doctrines*: All which are not now to be looked for in an ordinary Pastor. Only that which I am to take notice of, is their *illimited and universall power*, which the Apostles had; they were *supream Governors* in the Church; yet even their Authority was but ministerial, not magisterial. Therefore their name declareth they were but as *Embassadors* sent, and so were not to do any thing in their own name, but the name of Christ who sent them.

The opening of this Doctrine may serve for information and practical improvement. And

1. The Apostles had commission to preach to all Nations.

First, We are to take notice that the Apostles had an *universal commission*, to go and preach to all Nations, to disciple them, to plant Churches; And therefore they were in constant travails up and down; for they were the leaven, to leaven the whole world. They were like the Sunne whose light and heat have influence upon the whole earth. It is true, they divided their labours, some going into one part, and some into another; so that thereby the word of God prevailed more powerfully, than the Emperours sword. Christ indeed saith, *He was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel*; but the Apostles were sent to all the lost men of the world; and that grace of God which before was inclosed within the borders of *Judea*, was upon Christs ascension publicly offered to all Nations. This was that mystery, which the Apostles at first perceived not; but when thoroughly instructed, then they began to call nothing, or man unclean. It was then necessary, for the carrying on of this universal and illimited grace of God, to have such Officers, that should also be universal and illimited; that should go up and down preaching the Gospel of Christ; the goodness of God herein mercifully appearing, that no Nation though never so barbarous, and in such remote parts of the world, were shut out from this glorious light.

2. Yet the office of the Apostles did virtually contain all other.

Secondly, The Office of the Apostles, though thus differing from all other Offices, yet it did virtually and eminently contain all; therefore they could do what the Pastor and Teacher did. Hence Peter calls himself an *Elder*, 1 Pet. 5. 1. And John the Apostle (for we take it for granted, it was he that was the Penman of them) in his two last Epistles styleth himself only *Elder*. So that the Apostles they did preach, they did administer Sacraments, and thus what any other Officer did, they also could do. Even as Philosophers say, the vegetative and sensitive soul, is contained in the rational after a more eminent manner.

3. The Apostles had in their office something ordinary, and something extraordinary.

Thirdly, The Apostles therefore had in their Office, that which was ordinary, and that which was extraordinary. In their extraordinary they had no successors; in this particular of universal inspection and oversight to Churches, they had none. This Question indeed is greatly disputed by *Saravia*, and others that adhere to his opinion, who affirm, That though the Apostles had many extraordinary and personal priviledges, yet their Office was perpetual, even as that of the Pastors. There being (say they) the same perpetual grounds for one as well as the other. But that doth not appear probable. The first constitution and planting of Churches, requiring that peculiar Office, which planted Churches do not: Even as miracles were then required, but not now; and if any Nation were in these later dayes to be converted, there would be required no more an Apostle to do this, then miracles to confirm his Doctrine. As it was with the people of *Israel*, while they were at first to be an imbodied people, and before they were fully planted in the Land of *Canaan*; they had extraordinary Officers, and the Lord wrought wonderfull miracles amongst them, but he did not so afterwards.

Fourthly, But the Office of an ordinary Pastor, is to watch over his flock, to keep constant residence amongst them. Even the best Popish Writers do determine, That a Pastors residence with his people is *Jure Divino*. It is true, there are some cases



cases, when they may for a while be absent from them, *viz.* when they are called to consult in Synods and Councils about the publick advantage of the Churches of God, to stop the gangrene of error, or any prophaneness endangering the whole body; but a voluntary absence from a people is a great sinne, and inconsistent with all those ministerial duties that God doth require of them. How can they feed them? How can they admonish them? How can they rebuke them, and reprove, as occasion shall serve, unless present with them? That distinction *per se, vel per alium*, will not hold at the day of judgement. It is not another mans diligence, another mans care that will save thee. Now when we say, his residence is necessary, we mean not his meer personal and bodily presence only. For if men be lazy and negligent, their presence is an absence. The Scripture speaks of *Idol-shepherds, such have eyes, and see not; ears, and hear not; such have mouths, and speak not.* Now these whether absent or present, it's much alike. Therefore this residence requireth a faithfull and diligent discharge of that weighty work, constant preaching, a faithfull dispensing of Ordinances: And besides this publick Ministry, as occasion doth require, a more personal and private dealing with their flock, that so no man might perish. We read of our Saviour, *Joh. 4.* that he did not despise a poor ignorant woman, but though weary, and wanting bread, yet attended to her conversion, saying, *It was his meat and drink to do his Fathers will.* People are not to interpret such private endeavours of their Ministers, as too much busie-medling or affectation of dominion. Yea it is your duty to go unto your Pastors of your own accord, to enquire about the salvation of your souls; no man needeth to teach you this, in respect of your bodies or estates, to go to Physicians and Lawyers. Certainly were not these things more unto men, than their souls, they would have as much recourse to their Ministers. Consider that place, and set it upon your hearts, *Mal. 2. 7. The Priests lips should preserve knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts.* You see here our Office, and your duty. Oh then, were men in more holy fear about their souls! What if I have not knowledge enough to salvation? What if I mistake godliness, thinking it to be that which it is not? What if I delude and flatter my own soul? Oh let me go to those that are the wise Physicians of my soul! Let me enquire so diligently, so exactly, that whatsoever I am deceived in, it may not be in matter of my soul!

Fifthly, *Though a Pastor is thus ordinarily to reside with his own flocke, and above all things to attend thereunto, yet he is in some sense a Minister of the whole Church of God, and so is a debtour to the publick good thereof.* We must in every Minister distinguish of the habitual and aptitudinal disposition that is in him by his Office, and the actual relation, or exercise thereof. It is true, that a Minister is not *primo & per se*, made a Minister of the Catholick visible Church, as some learned men think; for then his principal and proper duty would be to attend upon the whole flock of Christ, and not this or that particular one; yet though he be not *Pastor Ecclesie universalis*, as the Pope doth arrogantly assume to himself, yet he is *Pastor in Ecclesia universali*, though he be not a *Pastor of the universal Church*, yet he is a *Pastor in the universal Church*. Hence when he preacheth or administred Sacraments in other Churches than his own, he doth it not as a private man, but as a Pastor in the Church, though not as a Pastor of that particular Church. The reason why a Minister may put forth ministerial acts, though not to his own people, ariseth from that habitual disposition, which he is put into by his Office. So that to be a Pastor of a people is not like that predicamental relation *ad esse*, which *Logicians* speak of; as if when a people (suppose) should be all consumed by the plague suddenly, that then a Pastors office doth wholly cease, not only to them, but to all other Churches; but it's rather under a *transcendental relation*, having an aptitudinal respect to

5. Though a Pastor is ordinarily to reside amongst his flock, yet he is a Minister of the whole Church of God.



the whole Church of God. But I am not here to dilate on this, it is enough at present to know, that a Pastor is not so limited to his own flock, as if he did not owe much also to other Churches; yea he is many wayes to advantage others also, by occasional preaching, by publick assistance in solemn Assemblies, by writing and many other wayes. Thus they are to be like some full fountains which are able not only to water the proper channel it emptieth it self into, but to overflow sometimes, as *Jordan* did to the refreshing of others. So that although a Minister is bound to prefer his own flock first, and principally to attend to them, as his own charge, yet what by prayer, direction and counsel, and what with many other edifying wayes, he is wholly to lay out himself for the good of others, and to be as precious ointment which cannot be hidden, but doth refresh standers by and strangers, as well as those that bear it about; or as musick doth not only delight those for whom it is purposely provided, and who are at the charge of it, but even others that are at a distance, or meer strangers.

Is it thus then, that Pastors are personally to attend to their flock? Then let it be an Use of *Exhortation*, to you that are the people, readily to submit unto, and entertain them in all their ministerial labours. If we are to preach, you are to hear, if we are to reprove, to admonish, to instruct, then it's your duty to be willing in all these things. Why then is it that many are so unwilling, so froward and opposite to the Ministers of God in their faithful discharge of their Office? Are we from house to house, from person to person, as occasion may require, thus to promote your souls good? Why are people so averse to this? They are not willing to be disquieted, they would be let alone in their ignorance and prophane-ness. Thus we take more pains than we have thanks for: They would like us better, if we would meddle lesse, if every man were left alone to his own self. But though happily you may say to other private Pastors, What have you to do to instruct us, to meddle with us, look to your own selves? Yet you cannot say thus to those whom God hath set over you; they must admonish, reprove, instruct, whether you love them or not, for so doing. So that it argueth horrible negligence in people, when the more lazy, the more careless a Ministry is, they like it the better; They love no zeal, no diligence, no forwardness in such as watch over them. And whereas the Devil goeth up and down like a rearing Lion, to seek whom he may devour; yet these are angry at the shepherds of their souls, who would deliver them out of his paws. If you were but sensible in what thral-dom you are in to your lusts, how difficult to get any bolts or fetters off from you, as also how many oppositions are in the way to Heaven; how hardly even a righteous man is saved, then you would say, all ministerial labours are too little to provoke thee in this way.

The second Use is of *Admonition to the Ministers of the Gospel*, that they would look upon Paul as a special president to follow. How ought it to quicken us up against all dulness, laziness and wearisomness in our work, when we have such an example as Paul before us? How often may we blush and mourn, to see our selves fall so short of Paul's diligence, zeal and courage in the wayes of God? For though we are not called with him to passe from countrey to countrey, from Church to Church, to advance the kingdom of Christ, yet within our sphere we are to imitate him; and as we see here in the Text, where there was the lesse need of his presence, to continue the lesse while, as in *Macedonia*; and where there was the greater necessity of his pains and labour, to continue the longer while. Thus ought we to discern of mens conditions, to consider who needeth more instruction, and more reproof than others, and so accordingly to apply our selves. Oh how happy is it when prudence and zeal meet both together in the Officers of the Church! This is to be *Luther* and *Melancthon* joyned in one person.



We come to the last particular observable in these words, and that is the consequent event, rather than the final cause of this his journey unto them, which is *to be brought on his way toward Judea*. You have this also mentioned in his former Epistle, 1 Cor. 16. 6. as being an expression of love, which he did much regard; and *vers. 11.* he speaketh of *Timotheus*, that he should conduct him. The original is *οὕτως*, *To be lead on forward with respect in his way*: and we have it often instanced in *Rom. 15. 24.* *I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way by you*. We read also of this loving respect shewed to *Paul* and *Barnabas* by the Church, *Act. 15. 3.* and especially *Act. 21. 5.* *The Disciples brought Paul and all his companions on their way with wives and children*. This shewed their affectionate love towards them. Yea that is an observable expression of *John Epist. 3. 6.* *Whom if thou bring on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well*. In the original it is, *Worthy of God*; thereby implying, that it was more than a meer civil expression, or courteous act of humanity. They did look at God in those eminent servants whom they did thus respect.

Now in this expression there are two things implied,

1. *Their cordial affections to them as friends*. This going along with them, did demonstrate how much they loved their company, that they were unwilling ever to be taken from them.

2. *It was a matter of honour and respect to their Officers*; it shewed they esteemed of them more, than of the great and noblemen of the world; yea they looked upon it as their own honour, that they had such an Apostle. From whence observe,

*That where the Ministry hath wrought spiritually upon a people, it worketh great love and honour to those that were the instruments thereof.*

Where the Ministry hath wrought spiritually, the Minister is esteemed highly.

Not that the Ministers of God are to look so much at external reverence, and civil respect, but chiefly to the heart-affection of a people, and their souls inward esteem of them. *Paul* speaketh of this respect he had from the *Galatians* upon the first work of his Ministry upon them, though they did abate afterwards of this love, *Gal. 4. 14.* *You received me as an Angel of God, yea as Jesus Christ. I bear them record, that if it had been possible, they would have plucked out their own eyes, and have given them to Paul*. What hyperbolical expressions of love are here spoken of? But all this is, where the Ministry hath had its spiritual efficacy; otherwise you cannot discern a man better never to have reaped any good by the preaching of the Gospel, than that he never knew yet what a converting, a quickning sermon meant: for if he had, he would never be so malicious, so opposite to the Ministers of the Gospel, as he is; he never getteth good by them; and therefore it is no wonder, that he hath no higher thoughts of them. But if through their Ministry he hath been converted, he hath been edified in godliness, then how dear and precious are their thoughts of such?

*Use of Admonition, Try thy affections to the Ministry, by the profit thou reapest by it*. Is it any wonder to hear an ignorant person, a prophane persons revile or oppose the preachers of the Gospel? How can it be otherwise? They never found any soul-saving benefit by their pains. Hence the Apostle to convince such Christians as were staggering, and beginning to fall off from the truth, and their affections to him, calleth to mind what good they once were made partakers of by his labours, *If ever they were converted, if ever they received the Spirit of God, it was through his ministry*. Therefore thrive and profit by their labours, and then despise them, if thou canst.





## S E R M. CX.

## Of the sinfulness of Levity, and inconstancy in the Children of God.

2 COR. I. 17.

When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea, nay, nay?

**I**N this Verse the Apostle maketh his apologetical Defence against such calumnies that were cast upon him, either for the changing of his purpose to come to them, or deferring it longer than they expected. And for the more efficacious convincing of them, he propounds his Discourse interrogatively, *Did I use lightness? Do I purpose according to the flesh?*

So that in the words we have,

1. The *accusation*, the *Crime*, *Cause*, or *Charge* supposed.
2. Their *Accusation* upon it.

The *Charge* supposed is, *That he was thus minded* to come to them, *βουλευόμενος*, because it was done out of deliberation, and serious advice. Though some Copies read *βουλομένης*, as denoting onely an *act of his will*. Now this purpose *Paul* did not fulfill, he changed his mind, and did not come according to expectation: Whereupon his adversaries charged two crimes upon him, which usually make men sinfully alter their minds.

1. *Levity and Inconstancy, Rashness and Temerity*; as if he did not regard what he said. The Greek word is *ελαφεία* from *ελαφρός* the *heart*, because of its *lightness* and *agility*.

2. *Carnal and corrupt designs*, they make men also often alter their resolutions, and that he doth remove in the ensuing words.

I shall take notice of the first at this time; we may consider how diligent the Apostle is to free himself from all *Levity* and *Inconstancy*, because his enemies would extend this to his Doctrine also, as appeareth in the following Discourse. He that is not to be trusted (say they) in his ordinary promises; he that is uncertain and inconstant there, will also be in his preaching and Doctrine; but the Apostle doth with all vehemency, yea with a solemn oath purge himself from this calumny. From whence observe,

Lightness and inconstancy is a great sinne and reproach to all, much more to Ministers.

*That lightness and inconstancy is a great sinne and reproach in any person, but especially in the Ministers of the Gospel.*

As it relateth to them, I shall (God assisting) treat of it, at the clause of the verse. For the present I shall handle it in the general, as a necessary truth to be made use of by all believers. And whereas this inconstancy



stancy may be discovered either in our civil and moral conversation, or in our religious and holy concernments.

I shall begin with the first. Let us consider the sinfulness of inconstancy in civil respects, which may be manifested in these particulars:

First, *When we are not consistent with our selves in our assertions and affirmations.* This is a great dishonour to God and our selves, when we will say and unsay things, affirme one thing at one time, and the contrary at another: And in this case *Inconstancy* is the same with *lying*. Thus it argueth a light vain heart, to talke one thing one time, and another thing another time. Hence the Rule is, *Oportet mendacem esse memorem.* A liar must have a good memory; and as others say, *A liar must have a good pair of legs, that he may runne away; for he will quickly be discerned, if he stay long in one place.* Now we may not wonder, if Paul would not be thought guilty of a lie. For the way of lying is inconsistent with the state of grace, as *Colos. 3. 9. Lie not one to another, seeing ye put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man.* Observe the Apostles argument, you that are made *new creatures*, you that have the Image of God repaired in you, how can you lie to one another? Hence you have David praying for the grace of God herein, *Psal. 119. 29. Remove from me the way of lying.* And, *vers. 163. I hate and abhorre lying, but thy Law do I love.* Mark the opposition, no man can love God and his Word, but he must abhorre lying. But how little do people generally take heed to themselves herein? They think not their gracelesse and unregenerated hearts may be discovered by such inconstant lying words, as well as by grosse enormities. Oh therefore look upon it as a very hainous sinne, not to be a person of gravity, consistency and harmony in thy words. Can there be a greater reproach then to say of a man, he will say and unsay, there is no heed to be given to his words? We are not to believe all things they say: if this were only thy dishonour, it were not so much matter, but it cometh from a corrupt heart within. Now the people of God above all persons are to look to their words in this respect, because with Paul they have their enemies to observe them. And we see how prophane persons are apt to charge them with this, that though they will not swear, yet they will lie. This indeed they do, because of their enmity and malice to such as feare God; but be thou sure to give no occasion herein for them to blaspheme. We see this holy Apostle in a solemne, sacred manner, sometimes calling God to witnesse, *That he speaketh the truth, and lieth not, 2 Cor. 11. 31 Gal. 1. 20.*

Secondly, *This inconstancy and mutability in civil respects, is discovered in our promises;* Yea, when it becometh a crimson sinne, then it is manifested in our promissory oaths, lightly and perfidiously breaking of them. Now as to abstain from all lying, and to speak the truth to every man, is made a property of a godly man: So also it is a character of a godly man, to keep his promise, to be faithfull to that, though it should be to his own damage, *Psal. 15. 4. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.* Though his Word and promises prove afterwards prejudicial to him, yet he preferreth truth above all earthly respects whatsoever. It is true, Divines have a Rule, *In malis promissis rescinde fidem, A sinfull promise is not to be kept;* for that would be to adde iniquity unto iniquity, and to double thy sinne. But in things that may be inconvenient to thee, thou art not to use lightnesse, and easily break thy word. Thus then it is a character of a godly man to look to his promises, to be very carefull to observe them: It's unjustice to break them, because by a promise thou becomest a debtor to another. And do you see Paul so carefull, lest he should be thought to be yea and nay? And

Of the sinfulness of inconstancy in civil respects. As  
1. When we are not consistent with our selves in our assertions.

2. In our promises.

art



art thou carelesse about thy word? Oh you must know, that true Religion and godliness doth not consist in the duties of the first Table, but of the second likewise. Do not think that this is godliness enough to pray, to perform holy duties, to be often in religious Ordinances: No, but thou art to abound in all truth and faithfulness towards man, to avoid all lying, all falshood in promises, and so to have truth both towards God and man. But how apt are our hearts to deceive us in this kind? Some think their righteousness towards man, because their words are as good as oaths, that therefore they shall go to Heaven, though they be not forward in religious duties; they have no family-worship of God; they do not walk singularly to the course of the world; and others again, they are ready to think that their religious duties, their forwardnesse and zeal therein, though they regard not words and promises, though they neglect the duties of righteousness, yet their condition will be good enough. Oh but remember this passage of *Paul* for ever, *Be not hasty to promise, labour not to forget what thou hast promised*, which will be if thou hast a conscientious regard unto thy self herein. For when thou doest not think it matter of conscience, when thou thinkest godliness is not much concerned herein, no wonder then if thou art so often found faulty herein. The Scripture is very frequent in pressing these duties of truth and righteousness between man and man.

3. In our affections.

Thirdly, *This mutability in civil affairs is seen in our affections, our love and respect to men.* It is a mans duty to be a faithfull friend to such whom he hath cause to respect; and therefore of a friend suddenly to become an enemy, for one while to love, and another while to hate, this is to be *yea and nay*. Men may be unfaithfull two wayes:

1. *When all the love and respect they professe is in hypocrisie.* Their tongues and their hearts doe no wayes agree. *Joab's Ave*, and *Judas his Salve*, when they intended destruction, is famous even to a Proverb. *David* often complaineth of such deceitfull men: but then there are unfaithfull men, who once did love, and were real for the time in their respects; but then

2. *Upon carnal sinfull grounds alter their affections again.* Such perfidious and inconstant dealings are abominable to God and man. It is one great part of *David's* complaint that maketh him so solemnly cry unto God for help, even because *the faithfull fail from among the children of men*, *Psal. 12. 1.* It is true, a man of no godliness may be a faithfull friend; there are great instances of such friends amongst *Heathens*; and the wisest Writers amongst them, have serious Discourses about *Friendship*. But godliness only doth rightly order and regulate this faithfull friendship. That is a Rule to be abhorred by all men, *Ama tanquam aliquando usus*; yet it may have its use, considering how wicked and uncertain men are: But true Religion inclineth a man to a settled and fixed way of love, to those that are fit subjects thereof. The Scripture speaketh of a love to all men, and of a brotherly love, which is upon more peculiar and holy respects. Now truly, if we speak in a moral sense onely, we may take up *Solomon's* complaint, *Prov. 20. 6. Most men will proclaim their own goodnesse; but a faithfull man, who can find?* Men will talk, and boast, and professe much love and kindnesse; but as it was in *David's* time, so it will be in all ages, *Psal. 5. 9. For there is no faithfulness in their mouth, their inward part is very wickednesse, they flatter with their tongue.* Hence is that Rule, *μη μνησθαι ἀνθρώπων*. But why is there such hypocrisie, dissimulation and falshood in mens hearts and tongues? It is because there is so little true godliness; for that maketh a man sincere, and of a single heart, both towards God, and towards man. If then *Paul* was so afraid of being thought a light and inconstant man any way; this sheweth what gravity, constancy and faithfulness of spirit we ought



ought to walk even to men in the world, godlineſs and Religion teacheth us theſe things, whereas to be double-hearted, double-tongued, cannot conſiſt with a man that is made a new creature. Labour then to inform thy ſelf of the extent of Religion, how farre godlineſs will put forth its ſelf, not onely in religious duties towards God, but righteous, juſt and faithfull actions towards man. Now that we may have ſuch plain and ſaiſfull ſpirits, conſider the aggravation of this ſinne in our civil actions, to be *yea* and *nay*, to be inconstant and changeable. And

Fiſt, *This is directly contrary to the glorious nature of God, whoſe image ought to be ſtamp't upon us; we are to be like God in our holineſſe.* Now how often doth the Scripture proclaim this glorious property of God, that he is *unchangeable*, that he is *faithfull in his Word and promiſes*? And truly this is the comfortable ſupport of our ſelves, for it's not any worth in us, but Gods faithfullneſs in his promiſes that preſerveth us to eternal glory. Thus he is called a *faithfull Creator*, 1 Pet. 4. 19. *ſo faithfull is he that hath called us*, 1 Theſſ. 5. 24. If God were not faithfull in his promiſes, even when we have unfaithfull hearts, how miſerable would our end be? It's Gods faithfullneſs, not our own we are to depend upon. Now the children of God they are to have this Image of God eſtabliſhed upon them, to be faithfull as he is faithfull. There is no *yea*, or *nay* with God. See this notably affirmed, Numb. 23. 19. *God is not a man that he ſhould lie, neither the ſonne of man, that he ſhould repent; hath he ſaid, and ſhall not he do it?* So 1 Sam. 15. 29. *The ſtrength of Iſrael will not lie or repent, for he is not a man that he ſhould repent.* The Scripture maketh it a neceſſary property to a man to lie, and to repent, unleſſe he be aſſiſted by grace. For ſuch is the weakneſſe and ignorance of his underſtanding, that he cannot fore-ſee things, and therefore muſt neceſſarily alter his reſolutions; and then ſo corrupt is his heart, that as there are ſeveral objects to entice him, ſo accordingly he transformeth himſelf; but God is infinitely wiſe and infinitely holy, and therefore there is *no ſhadow of change in him*. Oh then be in love with this glorious Attribute of God, and according to a creatures capacity do thou imitate it! Shew forth the Image of God in this thing, that thou art even a man, and wilt not lie, wilt not ſinfully change thy words and promiſes. I ſay *ſinfully*, becauſe we are ſo apt to be ignorant, to miſ-judge of things, to be deceived in what we reſolve of, that many times it is our wiſdom and duty to be of another mind, and to take up contrary reſolutions, to what once we pitched upon, of which more in its time.

Secondly, *Endeavour after ſuch conſtancy in words and life, becauſe as it is a great ſinne againſt God; ſo it's an heavy reproach and ſcandal to Religion.* If thou ſhouldeſt ſtudy to do the Devil ſervice, and to promote his Kingdom, ſo as to have Religion ſtink in the noſtrils of all men, thou canſt not take a more compendious way then to lie, to deceive, to be unjuſt, to make no conſcience of words and promiſes. This is to betray godlineſs to the ſcorn of all wicked men. You ſee that even the moſt holy men that are, that walk in a moſt tender conſcientious regard to all their words and works, yet cannot ſcape the cenſure of men in the world, that they are *hypocrites*, that they are *lyars*, that they have no truth in them. Oh then what a woe will be pronounced to thee, who ſhould give juſt occaſion for ſuch men to blaſpheme the holy calling, wherewith we are called? When one by his apoſtaſie and inconstancy had betrayed the true Religion of Chriſt, he was afterwards troubled in heart for it; he could have no reſt in his ſpirit, thought himſelf unworthy of any Church-communion; and therefore cried out, *Calcate me inſipidum ſalem, Trample upon me as unſavoury ſalt*. If then thou wouldeſt have Religion honoured, the Goſpel well ſpoken of; look to thy ſelf in theſe things, let no lie, no falſhood, no deceit be found in thy words and dealings. For if there be, preſently Religion is wound-

Of the aggravations of this ſinne.

1. 'Tis contrary to the nature of God

2. 'Tis a reproach to men



ed, then the carnal ones rejoyce; this is their godliness, this is their Religion. Certainly a godly heart cannot but bleed exceedingly, if at any time he hath in this way been so overtaken, as to make men think the worse of godliness; whereas on the other side to be true, righteous and faithfull in all thy wayes, as it is an ornament to Religion; so it maketh thee have an awe and a reverence in the consciences of the most profligate persons. Thus because *John* was a just man, therefore even *Herod* the King did reverence him, *Mark* 6. 20. *John* was both just and holy, and this wrought reverence.

3. Hereby a man makes himself unfit for Gods service.

Thirdly, *It is a great sinne to be thus rash and inconstant, because hereby a man maketh himself unfit for Gods service, either in Church or Commonwealth.* such an unfaithfull man can never do any good, but be scorned and reproached; as one Bishop was called *Enripus* in antiquity, for his inconstancy and mutability; and this was the great reason, why *Paul* doth with so much earnestnesse and affection take this calumny off from himself; for this would be a special means to bring his person and Doctrine into contempt: if there had been just cause to judge him such a mutable man, *Paul's* preaching would never have done good more; as we hear him saying at another time, *Gal.* 2. 18. *If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.* Thus it always falleth out, that a man of mutable and inconstant principles, he can never be serviceable to God; for this debaseth him before men, this maketh him vile and contemptible, and thereby like a broken vessel that is of no use.

4. 'Tis an abuse of our tongue.

Fourthly, *It is a great sinne to be thus inconstant in our words, because it's an abuse of our tongue, which the Scripture calleth a mans glory (though some apply it to the soul) now for thy glory to be a shame, to have thy tongue accounted a lying tongue, a double tongue, a false tongue; This is an aggravation of thy wickednesse.*

5. God threatens lying, but encourageth sincerity.

Lastly, *As God doth threaten to punish lying and deceitfull tongues, so he doth graciously encourage all such as are of sincerity in all their words and works.* A lying tongue is one of the seven abominations which God hateth, *Prov.* 6. 17. as on the other side, How mercifully doth God encourage some, *Isa.* 63. 8. for he said, *Surely they are my people, children that will not lie,* so he was their Saviour. So that if all these particulars be laid together, we may see how necessary it is to adde righteousness to our Religion, to be as Christ, *Whose lips were without guile* in respect of God and man. Oh this will afford thee great comfort; this will assure thee that thy Religion was not hypocrisie. It's easier performing multitude of duties then to walk thus uprightly towards men; they may be done with more ease to flesh and blood, yea they may be the fuel to thy hearts-pride and self-applause; but this tendeth really to mortifie sinne within thee, and to cause thee to have respect to all Gods commandments.



S E R M. CXI.

*Of the sinfulness of Inconstancy, and lightness in matters of Religion.*

2 COR. I. 17.

*When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness?*

**W**E have treated of *lightness* and *Inconstancy*, as it was expressed in *civil things*, whether in our words, Promises, or dealings between man and man. This you heard was both a *sin* towards God, and a *reproach* to religion, yea unrighteousness and falsehood in these outward affairs are so great sinnes, that many times they make the greatest wound in our consciences; and Experience confirmeth it, That when a man is converted to God, and made sensible of sin, the sinnes of his unrighteousness doth most trouble his conscience; It is longest ere he get the pardon of these in his own soul: and the Reason may be, because such unfaithfulness in words and dealings are condemned by the natural light of our conscience; Even Heathens have been able to judg such things great sinnes. Now what is done against natural light that maketh a greater gash in the conscience. Hence the Omission of those Duties which are meerly known by *supernatural light* is not so grievous to us, as when an humble broken-hearted sinner is called upon to *believe in Christ*, to rest his soul upon him for justification. How hardly is such a contrite spirit brought to judge that unbelief herein is a great and heynous sin; that God is provoked hereby; That, as much as lyeth in us we make Christ of none effect: So that, when such a wounded conscience can complain of its former unrighteous, unjust, and sinfull wayes it once lived in, yet it doth not at the same time bewail that great sin of *unbelief*, its stowardness, and slavishness, that it doth not receive Christ as a Saviour; yea, it rather judgeth it a duty to keep off from a Promise, and to question; whether Christ will receive such a wretched sinner as he feeleth himself to be. By which we see, what cause the people of God have to take heed of sin in this kinde; for how hardly are they healed! how long may it be ere thy conscience may be pacified thorough the blood of Christ.

But I proceed to a Second kinde of *Inconstancy*, which is of a greater guilt, because exprest in matters of greater concernment, and relation even to God himself. To be *yea* and *noy*, off and on, in matters of Religion, this proclaimeth our wretchedness. And

First, There is an *inconstancy in our Faith*. When we do lightly and uncertainly Receive the truths of God, so that we are ready for one Faith one week. and another Faith, another week: This is a very dangerous frame of soul, when a man is not of a sound judgment, neither hath laid a good foundation in Christian Religion, but, as the Apostle saith, *Ephes. 4. 4. is like a childe tossed up and down with every wind of doctrine*. Such are called by the Apostle Peter, 2 Pet. 3. 16. *unlearned and unstable*. In the

Of the sinfulness of Inconstancy in spiritual things: as in  
1. Faith.



number of these light and inconstant persons, we may reckon the *Galatians*, when he chargeth them with their suddain Apostacy, *Gal. 1. 6. I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you unto another Gospel.* They were ready for another Gospel, for other Teachers, who formerly had received the Apostle as an Angel of God, yea, as *Jesus Christ*. This lightness also was manifested in some of Christs Disciples, *John 6. 60, 61.* who upon their misunderstanding of some passages in our Saviours Sermon, judging them hard, and absurd, *from that time went back from him, and walked no more with him.* And truly are not these times a sad instance of the lightness and uncertainty of many men in the Doctrine of their Faith? In how many mens Religion may you finde Yea and Nay? How many are destroying that which once they did build? Now nothing is more contrary to the nature of Faith than this *inconstancy*. For, if we do consider what the Nature of Faith is, we shall finde, that it doth so autoritatively bring the understanding into obedience of the Divine truth, that it dare not give way to doubtings, and plausible Objections of deceitfull men any more. The Apostle, *Heb. 11. 1.* giveth us a full description of Faith, as to this matter of quieting and satisfying the soule, for he saith, *Its the substance of things hoped for; and the evidence of things not seen.* *ὑποστασις*, which is opposed to *εἰσρασις*, that which hath but a meer appearance, as Meteors, or rather, as colours in the Rainbow; and truly, many mens Faith hath no subsistency at all, it is only in their fancy. Hence it is, that there is almost a scepticisme introduced into Religion, as was once into Philosophy. But Faith doth consolidate the soul, and establish it upon Scripture-grounds, which are sure and unmoveable. The other word is *ἐλεγχος*, which is applied to a *Demonstration*, that doth even necessitate the understanding to give assent to it, so that it hath no power to refuse it. Thus also it is when the soul believeth, The spirit of God through the word so convinceth the heart, that no demonstration in Sciences nor objects to sense can be more potent to perswade. Oh then take heed of Inconstancy in Principles of Faith. This will argue thou art built upon a sandy foundation, that thou dost believe such Doctrines onely upon humane Motives, and deceitful grounds. Hence it is, that the Apostle doth exhort to a full perswasion of minde, even in those points that were more controversal, and disputeable, *Rom. 14. 5.* How much more then are we to be perswaded fully in our minde concerning those truths that are fundamental, and do so immediately concern our Salvation? This uncertainty then, this Yea and Nay, in matters of Faith ariseth from a meer humane faith, whereby we are carried out to believe these things, upon no better grounds, than the Turk doth his *Alcoran*, Education, custome, and Universality. This is the whole reason of our Faith; whereas a Divine Faith is wrought by the Spirit of God, as the efficient; it is that which listeth up the heart to receive the Word as Gods word. Though Men have never such parts and understanding in the sense of the Scripture, yet they cannot believe it, unless inabled thereunto by the Spirit of God. And again, Divine Faith hath also a divine Motive, the Authority and Testimony of God revealed in the Scripture, so that we believe not because man saith so, but because it is the Lord that speaketh. Thus the *Thessalonians*, chap. 2, 13. are commended, that they *received the Word, not as the word of men, but as it was indeed, the word of God.* Now then, when a mans Faith is wrought by Gods Spirit, and established upon Divine Authority, then it becomes more immoveable than the Heaven, and Earth, for, as God is alwayes the same, his word is alwayes the same, so is Divine Faith. This then all are to labour for, is even a full perswasion in their own minde, about the truths of Religion, to take heed of *inconstancy* and *instability* herein. We see the Martyrs could not by any terrible menaces, or fair Promises, be drawn of from the truths of God they had embraced; and was it not because they had a powerfull assurance



assurance of the truth of them from Divine Motives, such as could not fail?

2. In matter of our Conversion and Repentance for our sinnes it is very sad and dreadfull to shew Inconstancy. To be Yea and Nay in this respect, sometimes to mourn and complain of them, and at another time to wallow our selves in the mire again; how terrible is this? But yet how frequently doth it fall out so: what is this but to mock God, and dally with our soules? In times of afflictions, or under quick convictions of Conscience, to be then afraid of sin; then to bewail sin, then to resolve against sin: but when this fear is over, then to embrace our *Dalilah* again. There are few sinners but they come under this crime of *Inconstancy* in this respect; for many do not alwayes continue in an obstinate, senseless way; they finde some thawings, and meltings of heart, with *Pharaoh*, and therefore cry out, that God is righteous, and they are sinners; and they resolve to let their Lusts go, as *Pharaoh* did the people of Israel; but they quickly change their Resolutions again. Such therefore as finde these Yeas and Nays, these ebbings and flowings, let them seriously consider, what an high provocation this *Inconstancy* is, of God against their soules. This unsteadfastness was often complained of by the Prophets, in the people of Israel; They were as so many Grasshoppers, that leap up on high from the ground, but then settle on it presently again. In their afflictions they cryed out of their Idols, they called upon God; but then proved like a deceitfull bow: and is not this an Epidemical sin? What is more ordinary than to be soul-sick, to be conscience-smitten under some Sermons, or some sad afflictions, and fears, but in all these things to have *Reubens* Curse upon their soules, *unstable like water*, upon which you make any impression, but it receiveth none? Its one of *Solomons* wonderfull things, that leave no footsteps to be observed, *A Ship in the Sea, none can tell which way it passed*. Thus it is with many, they sin, and they repent; and they repent, and sin; insomuch, that when you see them overcome with their old lusts, and passions, would you think they were ever the men, that prayed so, that resolved so? you cannot see the least footsteps of any such Repentance. Now, that all may be afraid of such lightness, and uncertainty, it is good to consider these Particulars.

First, *If there be reason at any time for thee to look upon thy sinnes, as bitter and terrible, the same will hold at all times*. Oh the time hath been, when in thy thoughts such sinnes thou hast committed were intolerable, the memory of them was as gall and wormewood. Thou didst cry out, take them away, or that the Lord would pardon them. Now do but consider, Is there not the same reason still to think so? Is sin grown any better? Is it less damning? Is it less sinfull to God then it was formerly? Know then, sin is not altered, that is, hath as terrible guilt as ever; but thou art changed; those convictions, those powerfull Operations of the Spirit of God are not happily now upon thee; they are withdrawn, and thou art left to thy own natural corrupt self. Remember then thy self, saying, *The time was, no serpent or toad was more odious to me than my sinnes: the time was, when night and day they were a burden and torment to me; but now they grieve me not, they trouble me not; sin is not changed, but I am changed*.

2. Consider this, *For thee to sin after such convictions and terrors, doth admit of the greater aggravation*; because it is done against sense, and experience of the bitterness thereof: its committed against more experimental and practical knowledg, which maketh any sin to be exceeding sinfull. Those senseless wicked men, who run into all excess of impiety, and have no troubles of heart, they know not what they do, they cannot tell, whether it be a bitter and evil thing or no to depart from God. They indeed hear the Word of God; and the Ministers of God say, that though sin be sweet, yet at last it will

2. In our Conversion and Repentance.

Motives against this Inconstancy.  
1. There is the same Reason at all times against sin.

2. Sinnes after Convictions are the greater.



will bite like an adder, and sting like a serpent: they hear them say, that the evil of sin is far greater than the evil of any punishment and torment; but they think them words only; they never had any experience or taste of any such bitterness: But it is otherwise with thee; thou hast had wounds in thy heart, the terrors of God have fallen upon thee. The Law hath appeared in its accusing and condemning power; therefore thou art the more inexcusable who wilt run into this fire, when thou hast been burnt with it; yea, with this taste, there hath been practical light, and experimental knowleg; and therefore thy sin is the greater: a general knowledg of any thing is but confused and weak in respect of a practical and experimental one. Hence wicked men are said *not to know God*, because they have onely a general knowledg, they do not practically improve this, so as to love God, to fear him, and obey him. If then thou hast been in the pains and torments of sin, and yet wilt venture on the committing of it, who will pittie thee? If a man should be brought out of Hell torments, to live here upon earth, and yet would commit sin again, would any have compassion on such a man, if afterwards he should be damned. Thus it is with that man, who hath the beginnings of Hell already upon him: its Gods mercy that he giveth thee such a taste of Hell in thy conscience, that thou mayst fly from sin: But if, for all this, thou wilt be worse than a fool, that no experience will teach thee, then how just is it with God to deliver thee up irrecoverably unto Eternal wrath?

3. This Inconstancy is a mocking of God, and a dallying in soul-matters.

3. *This Inconstancy is nothing but a mocking of God, and dallying in soul-matters.* What a Thunderbolt should this be in thy heart, to think, I have but mocked God, as much as lyeth in me, though he will not be mocked? I have been but an Hypocrite, and dissembler with them; my Repentance was a lye, my Tears were a lye; for I am the same man again that I was. The Scripture indeed maketh *every man a liar*; but to be a liar in thy Repentance, a liar in thy sorrow for sin, This is the most abominable and detestable of all. Take heed then of having *an heart and a heart*, as the Scripture calleth it, in these things: An *heart* to cry out of sin, and an *heart* to receive and imbrace it again.

4. It may justly cause God for ever to forsake thee.

Hence, In the 4th place, *Because of this Hypocrisie, and false-dealing with God, it may be just with him for ever to forsake thee*: so as to deliver thee up to an impenitent heart, never to have the least fear, or sorrow about sin any more. Pharaoh, that sometimes had relentings upon him, yet at last was so hardened that he never melted more; and the nearer he grew to his destruction, the more stupid he was. Thus the people of *Israel*, who had so often dealt unfaithfully with God, in a seeming manner, repenting, but afterwards turning back to their lusts again, were at last delivered up to *blinde eyes, to deaf ears, to hard hearts, never to understand and to be converted*, as we have it *Isa. 6. 9, 10.* As Aguish Fits holding very long, at last end in a Consumption: Thus thou who hast often had troubles, and workings of heart about sin; yet falling often into them again, may become forsaken for ever, as *Saul* was; the Lord never meeting thee more in any Ordinance.

3. This Inconstancy is a great sin in Promises and Resolutions.

The Last Particular, *wherein lightness and Inconstancy is a great sin, as it relateth to spirituall things, is, In the Promises, and Resolutions, or Vowes that may be made to God.* I shall not treat of a *Religious Vow*, or a *Promise by Oath*, at this time: only I shall insist upon such Promises and Purposes as we may make unto God at any time; as First, *In times of great Afflictions and streights*: when the fear of death or any other judgment is upon us, how ready are we to make Promises both to men and God, that if ever he will recover us, if ever he will give health again, then we will walk more carefully, abstain from



from the sinnes we were addicted unto, as *Pharaoh* cryed out, Take away this judgment, this once: Thus we say, if God will try me once more, then what a Reformed man will I be? But if God spare thee, then how quickly are such holy Purposes forgotten? Now you are to know, this is a great aggravation of thy sin to promise thus to God, to purpose thus before God, and then to deal falsely. Yet what slight and formal thoughts have people concerning such Promises? But one day thou wilt finde the heynousness of thy false heart herein. A second time, when we are to make Promises to God, is at the *Sacrament of the Lords Supper*? where the consciences of men are so far awed, that they engage themselves to God, and renew their Covenant with him, to walk with more care and fear than ever before. But how much Yea and Nay is therein many Communicants? Who would think thou shouldest be so careless and negligent man, after such solemn Stipulations made with God? Oh how little are these Promises thought of, that we frequently make to God? And if it be so sinfull to break a Promise made to man, how much more to God? *Thou hast not lyed to man*, said *Peter* to *Ananias*, *Act. 5. 4.* And *Satan* is said to fill his heart, to make him do so. To how many may we say, after such Promises made to God, but broken, *why hath Satan filled thy heart to lye unto God?* It is *Solomons* Advice concerning Vowes and Promises made to God, *That we should not be hasty and rash in such things*, *Eccles. 5. 2.* with this Reason, *For God is in heaven, and thou in earth.* He is an Infinite glorious God; and thou a poor worm upon the earth. Surely this negligence in people generally to fulfill their Promises made to God should be more seriously bewailed than it is. Your Baptisme, The Lords Supper, they are Covenants made with God; there is a renewed Promise made to God in Sacramental Administrations, that we will be the Lords, that we will not live to the world, or sin, but to God alone. Now, take heed of perfidiouness in this particular. Thou takest Gods Name in vain, in this case; and he will not hold such guiltless: Yea, there is never a Prayer that we pray unto God, but there is implicately a Promise made to God, that if he will grant our Requests, we will gloryfie his name by an holy and godly life. Take heed then of being judged out of thy own mouth: God, at that Day of Judgment, will bring thy own words, thy own Promises against thee. Oh be able to say with *Paul*, in the Text, even to God himself, *When I thus purposed to reform, to become a new man, did I then use lightness? did I purpose according to the flesh?*



## S E R M. CXII.

*Of walking according to the flesh.*

2 COR. I. 17.

*Or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh?*

**I**N these words the Apostle doth remove the Second sinfull Cause from himself that useth to make men change their purposes, and that is, A respect to *carnal Considerations*. Men that look only to their Profits, to their Greatness and Honor, such must needs be *mutable* and *inconstant*, like the *Camelion*, turning into the colour of every object they come nigh; which *Aristotle* attributeth to *fear* in that creature, if there be any such thing. And thus when men purpose and design, but fear of losing some carnal Advantages their hearts are set upon, causeth them to be Yea and Nay, to resolve, and then to unresolve; to promise, and then to break promises. For, as in Speculatives, Conclusions are according to the nature of Principles from when they flow; so, in all Practicalls, our Actions are coloured according to the Ends we propound to our selves.

Now the corrupt Principle, which *Paul* doth here disavow, is, *To purpose things according to the flesh; κατὰ σάρκα*. This is spoken opposite'y to the willing of things according to the Principles of Godliness revealed in the Word; or, as in other places to *the Spirit*; for, *to walk in the flesh*, and to *walk in the Spirit*, Rom. 8. are made immediately opposite to one another.

Now this Phrase, *According to the flesh*, hath a Threefold signification in Scripture:

Of the Phrase according to the flesh, which is taken for  
1. The humane Nature.

First, it signifyeth *That which is done according to the meer humane nature without any corruption*. Thus Christ is said, Rom. 1. 3. *to be born of the seed of David, according to the flesh*. That Opposition doth evidently demonstrate against *Socinians*, that there is another nature in him, which is, his Godhead, so 1 Pet. 3. 18. he is said *to be put to death in the flesh*.

2. External Priviledges.

2. This Expression doth sometimes signifie *The External Priviledges, whether civil or Ecclesiastical, and the glorious Respects that may accompany them*. Thus the Apostle, 2 Cor. 5. 16. *We know no man after the flesh, no not Christ himself*: That is, We do not attend to any External or sensible Considerations that may be had from Christ; but our hearts are wholly carried out in a way of believing on him, even as our Saviour saith, Luke 8. 21. *My Mother, and my brethren, are they which hear the Word of God, and do it*. Thus some are said *to glory*, and *to have confidence in the flesh*, which *Paul* renounce, h, Phil. 3. 4. and that was in the Priviledges of the Church of *Israel*. So that any external thing in Religion, though it be vouchsafed as a Priviledg by God, yet it is but *flesh*, in respect of the gracious works of Gods Spirit. Thus there is a *Jew and Circumcision in the flesh*, and a *Jew and Circumcision in the Spirit*, which is good to be observed; for of too many



many mens Religion may you apply that which is spoken in another case, *it is flesh, and not spirit*. This we are to press much upon you, that in prayer, in Ordinances, in all approaches to God, you be a spiritual people, not carnal, resting upon Externals only.

3. This Expression, *according to the flesh*, is most frequently for a corrupt Principle within us, according to which we direct and order our course. Thus *flesh*, in the Scripture, signifieth the whole man, as it is corrupt, comprehending in it, not onely the Sensitive and inferior part of a man, but his Rational also; hence *Col. 2. 18.* *We have a fleshly minde.* and *Gal 5.* *Idolatryes, Heresies*, which are in the minde, are said to be *the fruit of the flesh*. It is true, *Ephes. 2. 3.* there seemeth to be a Distinction, because it is said, *fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the minde*; but even there the minde is *flesh*; and the meaning of the Apostle is, to distinguish of sinnes: some whereof arise from the Sensitive Appetite, as Drunkenness, Uncleanness: others from the Understanding, as desire of Vain-glory, Idolatry, Heresie, &c. all which are the *flesh* in a large comprehension. Now, in this sense the Apostle taketh it here, *He did not purpose according to the flesh*, that is, according to corrupt and sinfull Principles within him, but in all such things was guided by the Spirit of God, determining upon those things wherein he might most promote Gods honour, and the Churches good. We see this Apostle, *2 Cor. 10. 3.* speaking very affectionately in this point against those *Corinthians*, who accused him, as walking according to the *flesh*; which he denyeth; saying, *That though he walk in the flesh, yet he doth not war after it*: he did not use carnal weapons, such as humane wisdom, external worth, and greatseels, with carnall Policy, to destroy what opposed it self against the Gospel.

From the Words thus explained, Observe,

*That a purposing, and walking according to sinfull, Carnal Principles, must needs make a man very instable; and mutable.*

The Apostle in this defence doth plainly suppose, that this is an ordinary cause to make men inconstant in all their wayes; hope of getting, and fear of losing, doth cause a continual ebbing and flowing in our affections: where we have not one immoveable Principle fixed and settled to walk by, there must be frequent variations: for new lusts do beget new actions; and the creature being driven up and down with uncertainties, so they must be that adhere thereunto. A man cannot stand steadfastly upon a round running bowl, or upon slippery ice: and such are all the Creatures: Infomuch, that he that would be, as is said of Christ, *The same yesterday, and to day, and forever*, must take the word of God for his Rule, which is unchangeable; invariable, and abideth for ever. To discover this Truth more fully, let us instance in some particulars, of the *Principles of flesh*, which all by nature, according to their respective temptations, are prone to follow.

And first, *Earthly Profit*, and Worldy advantages, are a sweet bait of the *flesh*, which allure many. Infomuch, that they resolve and purpose upon no other thing, than what is accommodated thereunto; and therefore are *pro* and *contra*, for, and against, even as this Principle of *earthly Profit* doth move them. These make the world their God, *Mammon* their God, and as the Godly submitteth all his Purposes and Resolutions to Gods will: this he intendeth, if God will; this he supposeth to do, if God permit: so doth a man inflamed to this carnal Principle of Profit, order all things with subordination thereunto; this he will do, if his Profit require it; This he will do, if his Profit command it. the Papacy of *Rome* may notoriously be charged with this Principle of *flesh*, in all their designs,

2. Corrupt Principles.

Walking by carnal Principles makes men unstable and inconstant.

Principles of flesh.  
1. Covetousness



which are only to advance the Popes Crown, and to nourish the Monks bellies. The Apostle speaketh of some who accounted *gain godliness*, 2 Tim. 6. 5. Such ought to be so odious to us, that the Apostle commands us to turn away from them. The same Apostle at another time doth, even with weeping, speak of others, *who minde earthly things*, Phil. 3. 19. Wonder not then, if those who walke by this Principle of the flesh, they will get profit and wealth though they lose God, Heaven, and their own soules: that they whose soules as well as their bodies seem to be of the dust, if they are driven away, as the dust before every winde, having no consistency at all. Did not this desire of profit make Judas turn such an Apostate, of a Disciple of Christ, to be a perfidious Traytor? Did not the Love of this present world make Demas to forsake Paul? So that you see, all those must necessarily be unconstant in Religion, who have no better Principle to move them than earthly Respects and Advantages. These are like Esau, called therefore a *prophane Person*, Heb. 12. 16. because, for a morsel of meat, he sold his Birthright. This argueth a man to be prophane, when he hath an higher esteem of Mony, of Riches and Wealth, than of Religious things. Oh, say rather, Let mony perish than my soul perish; let wealth and profit go, rather than peace and quietness of a good conscience.

## 2. Ambition.

A Second Principle of the flesh, which maketh men inconstant, is *An inordinate desire of Greatness and Honour above others*. They that walk by this, must be black and white; now say, and than deny, according as those are affected from whom they expect Advancement. This secret Ambition is accompanied with a vehement heat, and drought of the soul, making a man restless, till their desires be accomplished. Neither may we think the Heathens onely to be blamed for these proud affectations. We see even the Apostles twice contending about Primacy and Superiority; which is the greater wonder, if we consider the meanness of their own condition they were in, as also of Christ their Master; and yet, more wonder it is, if we remember how frequently our Saviour did inform them of Persecutions, and saddest Calamities for his sake. We read likewise of Diotrephes, 3 John 9. *who loved to have the preheminence*, and would not own, no not the Apostle John himself. Now, those that walk by such Principles of pride and ambition, they must needs be like a *materia prima*, ready to receive any form. They flatter, they dissemble; they commend, they dispraise; and thus debased they are, that afterwards they may be exalted. Now nothing is more odious and abominable to a sincere man, than such mutability and uncertainty. Hence Christians of old were called the *just and holdfast men*. It was not thus with John Baptist, of whom, saith our Saviour, *What went ye out to see? a reed shaken with the winde*. No, he did faithfully and constantly discharge his duty, without any fear of men; But how many may we go out to see, *as reeds shaken with every winde*? And as the reed must grow in some mire, so must such mutable persons have some carnal respect to encourage them. Those that climbe up to high places are apt to have their heads grow giddy, and to be unsteadfast; so that, when men lay this as a foundation, I will have Preferment, I will have Honor and greatness; though it damn me; this man walketh upon slippery ice, and no wonder if he often fall.

## 3. Pleasing of men.

3. Another carnal Principle, which maketh Inconstancy in all our wayes, is, *Pleasing of men*. When a man maketh this his Rule he must change often, and be as a shadow, which moveth wholly according to the motion of the body, stoopeth when that stoopeth, and is upright when that is upright. The Apostle doth notably disclaim such a sinfull distemper, saying, Galat. 1. 10. *If I should please men, I could not be the servant of Christ*. Man is a mutable creature, subject to different apprehensions, to different affections, loving one thing one day, and hating it at another. Then must they also, who would please men, be prepared for all



all formes and postures: insomuch, that a man cannot live in greater bondage and slavery, than to be *ὑποτάσσεται, a peoples ape*; or to study the humouring of those we have to deal with. If thou art guilty of this *man-pleasing*, thou art never able to do thy duty; thou canst not reprove and punish sin; thou canst not be just and righteous in thy place. Our Saviour said to his Disciples, *How can you believe, which receive glory of one another?* John 5.44. *and do not seek the glory of God only?* Certainly, till we study to please God alone in our lives, and aim at his glory, who is alwayes the same, we must be unstable as water, and be a lyar to every man. We read of some who did believe in Christ, yet dared not to make Profession thereof, for fear of the Jews: Here was a desire to *please men* rather than God. But can the good word, and favour of men deliver thee from the wrath of God in thy conscience? and eternal torments hereafter? When Judas pleased the Chief Priests, in betraying of Christ; could they comfort him in the Agonies of his conscience? yea, when he bewailed his sin: They say, *What is that to us? look thou to that,* Mat. 17.4. Such miserable tormentors instead of comforters will all those men be, whom thou hast pleased, to displease God.

5. *Time-serving* is a Principle, which whosoever walketh by, must be as a weather-Cock that is turned with every winde. The people of Israel are 4. *Time-serving.* remarkeable for this *Inconstancy* under wicked and Idolatrous Kings: then they erected Altars, they adorned Images: and then immediately under Religious and Reforming Kings they would destroy the Idolls, and deface the Images they had set up. It is true, all change and alteration in Religion is not to be blamed, yea, sometimes it is to be encouraged. When Luther and Melancton gave over their former corrupt Doctrines, and superstitious Practices, the Papists condemned them for Turn-coats, and Apostate persons; when yet this change was necessary. So that, as they say in Philosophy, there is *alteratio corruptiva* and *perfectiva*; a *destructive change*, and a *perfective change*: thus it is also in Divinity, and the Latter is absolutely commanded by God, when Errors or Prophaneness have, like a gangrene, spread over the whole Church: but of that in its time. We are now speaking of that sinfull change whereby people accommodate themselves to the times they live in, and therefore judg of truth, judg of the holy things of God, as Jeroboam did, with subordination to State-Interests. This is the great carnal Policy that the Wise-men of the world admire; as if the true Doctrines of Christ were not alwayes the same: as if a thing might be the worship of God one time; and Idolatry at another: as if the same thing might be the Doctrine of Christ at one time, and Heresie at another: as if that of Cusanus were true, though otherwise not a very bad man, That the Scripture is to be understood according to the present state and Affairs of the Church; and therefore, saith he, *We are not to wonder, if at one time some Customes and Usages be exacted in a Church, which, at another time are to be decryed and refused.* But certainly the Scripture is a Rule of Faith and Manners in all Ages, in all Changes and Revolutions. Though Kingdomes and States may alter, yet the Scriptures are the same still, and what was once the Doctrine, Worship, and Order of Christ, is still the same.

Lastly, That all Particulars may be comprehended in one, To live according to the Principles of the Flesh, is *To set up our selves as the Alpha and Omega*; 5. *Self-pleasing.* to enjoy our selves, and to use all things, yea God himself, in subordination therunto. Thus this love of a mans self, even to the hatred of God, is that which maketh us put on multiform shapes, it is that which maketh us bend and bow, and comply in all things. For, if we did love the Honour and glory of God, more than our own selves, as we ought to do, then we should not



attend to self-advantages, but Gods glory and honor: So that we may say, This Self-love is the *Beelzebub* in; it is like *Pharaohs* lean Kine, that devoureth all it meeteth with. Why doth a man pursue this thing one time, and then oppose it again? Why doth he build, and then destroy it again? It is only for *Self*. No wonder then, if our Saviour laying down a fundamental Qualification in his Disciples, requireth, that a man should *deny himself*, *Mat. 16. 24.* and truly, he that cannot *deny himself*, he will certainly deny God, and Christ; he will deny the true Faith of Christ, when he is plunged into extream temptations. Self-denial then is that which will make a man deservedly be called *homo quadratus*, better than he in *Aristotle*; for he is settled upon such a sure and immoveable Rock, that he will abide the same under all stormes and tempests.

In the next place we are to shew, What are those *Principles and rules of grace* we ought to walk by, opposite to those of the *flesh*, that some may alwayes be steadfast, and immoveable in the work of the Lord.

But for the present, we may by Use of Instruction be informed what to expect from any carnal man; he will never be faithfull to God, and man, he will change and alter according to earthly respects: and therefore every such man is a liar, both towards God, and man. *Constantine* did once, by way of stratagem, make as if he were turned *Arrian*, and published, That all who would not *Arrianize* should lose their Preferment, and be deprived of his favour. Hereupon there were very many began to change their Religion, many did deny the Deity of Christ. But when he had discovered them enough, then those few who would not deny the truth, and imbrace *Arrianism*, though it was to their great loss, he embraced and encouraged; and, as for the other Apostates he threw them off, saying, That they, who were not faithfull to God, would never be so to him. Now, from all natural men, who walk by no Scripture-Principles, but the lusts of their own hearts; you cannot expect any better: they never followed Christ, but for the loaves, and therefore, when they fail, they will also withdraw. These are like the Mill, that goeth no longer than the waters drive it. No wonder then, if godly men finde them to love to day, and to hate to morrow; for they do thus even to God himself. Take heed then of purposing the things of thy soul *after the flesh*; for then all those present affections will presently dye, and wither within thee. Thou wilt not long hold in the same minde, but we shall quickly see it changed, and thee falling off. Therefore, as *David* prayed, when he saw the people offer willingly, *1 Chron. 29. 18.* *O Lord God keep this for ever in the hearts of thy people.* So we may pray for thee, when at any times manifesting some desires, some affections, to what is good, *O Lord keep this for ever in their hearts.*





## SERM. CXIII.

## Of Principles in general, and a godly mans in particular.

2 COR. I. 17.

*Or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh?*

**H**itherto we have been discovering *what principles of flesh there are*, which natural men do walk by, whereby they are made so mutable and inconstant. We are now to shew the godly mans principles, who purposeth things according to the Spirit, and thereby he is alwayes the same, because God and the Scripture is alwayes the same; yea hereby as *Nazianzen* saith, it may be said of him as of God (though with infinite disproportion) *I am God, and change not*: So the godly man having the Image of God stampt upon him, he is godly, and he changerh not. But before we come to specifye the principles of the godly who purpose after the Spirit, let us take notice of something in the general, relating both to the spiritual and carnal man: As

First, *Herein are men differenced from brut beasts, that they are carried forth to operations by some principles within them, whereas the bruits are acted by a natural instinct.* The Schoolmen make a Question, *Whether the brut beasts do worke for some end, or no?* And they conclude negatively, because they have no reason or understanding; yet by God, the first cause, they are acted to an end, which they do not understand: according to that Rule, *Opera natura, sunt opera intelligentie.* But now man he being a rational creature, as he hath some end to which he referreth all his actions; so he hath several principles guiding of him to that end. These principles are like the wings to the Bird, the oars to the ship; legs to a man to bring him to his end. So that principles having such powerfull influence into what a man doth; it behoveth a man above all to look to them, to have sanctified and spiritual principles, to consult, choose, and act by.

Secondly, *These principles whereby all men do walke, are either speculative, or practical, such as regard truth, to be imbraced, or good to be practised.* Indeed there are in all men some general and common principles; but of those we speak not. There are superadded to these, acquired principles, or infused; and these are more proxim and particular than the former. It is a general remote principle, *That good is to be imbraced, evil to be avoided.* But (alas) come to the practical improvement of this, and then you would think the clean contrary were true, *that evil only was to be loved, and good to be eschewed*; and the reason is, because the corrupt heart of man acquireth practical sinfull principles to walk by. So that untill God infuse heavenly principles, he doth no more incline to, and delight in good, than swine can in pleasant flowers.

Thirdly, *Such is the universal corruption of man by nature, till regenerated,*

Of Principles.

1. Herein men differ from brut beasts, because they act from inward principles, beasts by instinct.

2. Principles are either speculative or practical.

3. All the principles of natural men are sinfull and carnal.

that



that all the principles he walketh by, are sinfull, carnal, and earthly. And therefore Paul alledgeth out of the *Psalms*, *Rom.* 3. That there is none understandeth, none seeketh after God, there is none that doth good, no not one. And is it any wonder? For can men of corrupt principles do holy actions? Every man is as his principles are; they make him a good tree, or a bad tree. As a man is affected, so he judgeth, so he loveth, so he hateth, so he liveth and worketh in all things. Hence with the Schoolmen, we have often this assertion, *That what principles are to conclusions, the same is the end in things to be done.* And therefore as from false principles a man can never gather true conclusions; so neither from a corrupt end is a man ever able to perform a good action. They have also another Rule, *That what the forme is in natural things giving being unto them, the same is the end in moral things, and that humane actions are specified from the end.* They are gold or dross, as the end intended is; all which shew the necessity of a mans attending to his principles; what they are that move him and carry his soul out to work. For it is not so much a mans actions and wayes, as his principles therein that do denominate him; and seeing they are either the Spirit or the flesh; every one either walketh in the flesh or the Spirit; let a man faithfully search into his own bosome, and observe what hath the predominant efficacy; what he may call his principles he purposeth, and liveth by: and the rather, because

3. Principles  
are oft hidden

In the fourth place, *These principles, though efficacious, yet are manytimes latent and hidden.* It is a Rule, *Principia sunt maxima virtute, minima quantitate.* Therefore being thus secret and inward, it is not easily found out, what principles we walk by. Do those that walk after the flesh, know they do so? Do they believe so? Do they complain of such a rotten and sandy foundation? No they rather applaud themselves: even the most carnal men that are, do judge their principles good and right; they have a good heart, and good ends. No doubt when Paul persecuted the Church, opposed so zealously the way of Christ, though in all this he was acted by *fleshy principles*, yet he thought them Religion and service of God. It is therefore our duty to examine, and search into every corner of our hearts, to find out the bottome of thy soul. For thou art never able to judge of thy condition, whether good or evil, till thy principles are made manifest in thee. How often mayest thou flatter thy self, as doing things for God and his glory, when it is thy own corrupt self, thy own glory, thy own advantage?

5. There are  
principles of  
flesh even in  
our holy du-  
ties.

Fifthly, *These principles of the flesh, are not onely in our external dealings with men, or in grosse bodily sins, but in religious duties, and our sacred performances.* Oh consider this diligently! A man may pray after the flesh, hear after the flesh, preach after the flesh, and that is, when a *fleshy* motive putterh us upon spiritual duties. The *Pharisees* when they prayed, they did walk according to the flesh; and those who adored Angels, and introduced voluntary worship, these had a *fleshy mind*, *Col.* 2. 18. Men are in the flesh, and walk in the flesh, not onely in respect of grosse sinnes, and bodily iniquities, but even when in spiritual duties they are led by sinfull motives. Thus *Jehu*, when he purposed the destruction of *Ahab*, and his family, the overthrow of *Baal* and his worship, he did all this after the flesh. When *Judas* resolved to follow Christ, to be his Disciple; all this was a *resolving according to the flesh*. Now this we should hear with trembling, and an holy fear; my religion may be flesh, my holy duties flesh, my profession of godlinesse, nothing but flesh. For though the duties themselves are good, and commanded by God, yet the principles from which they flow, may be the flesh in thee. Do not take therefore all holy performances to come from a principle of sanctification in thee. Did hypocrites and temporary believers diligently consider this, it would be a special means to prevent their final destruction.

Lastly,



Lastly, *The principles of the carnal, and the spiritual are directly contrary to one another, even as light and darknesse; and therefore one can never agree with the other.* Prov. 29. 27. *An unjust man is an abomination to the just; and he that is upright in his way, is an abomination to the wicked.* Every godly man cannot but abominate the way of the wicked; and then the wicked abominateth the way of the godly, so that there can never be any agreement. Now both strive for their principles, dispute for their principles. The godly man urgeth his, and would bring men off to them. The wicked man is as resolute for his principles, and is active to have them take place. And from hence is that enmity between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent. Now it's a godly mans duty to keep close to his principles, not for a moment to depart from them; This is to betray God and his conscience. But the wicked man he is bound to leave his, to come out of them with all haste, for they will be his damnation at last.

In the next place, let us consider, *What are the principles of a godly man, by which he thinketh, purposeth and liveth.* So that if at any time he deviateth from this, his heart is smitten, his soul melteth, saying, This is not according to my principles, I have not thought, said, or done like my self.

Now there are two general principles of a godly man, whereby he is kept from purposing or living according to the flesh. The one I may call *Principium cognoscendi*: The other *Principium essendi*, or rather *efficiendi*.

For the first, which is the principle of knowledge, by which we are to regulate our selves in faith and manners, that is the holy Scriptures, which are a perfect, sufficient and adequate Rule to live by, how contemptuously soever the *Papists* on the one hand, and *Enthusiasts* on the other, do speak of it. We see the Apostle *Paul*, 2 Tim. 3. 15, 16. directing *Timothy*, though so eminent in the Church of God to the Scriptures, not to the immediate inspirations, but unto them which he had known from his youth, giving admirable commendations of them from the efficient cause, they were by the inspiration of God, who would not regard what God himself saith? That will prove true, and every thing contrary to it a lie: and then the adjunct property, *holy*; they are *holy Scriptures*; By these alone thou wilt be enabled to have an holy nature, and to live an holy life. As those that keep in Apothecaries shops, smell of the ointment: thus those who exercise themselves in the *holy Scriptures*, they become *holy*, they are conformed thereunto. Such a man is like a tree by the waterside, bringing forth his fruit in due season. Again, they are commended from their end, which is to *make us wise to salvation*. This is the desirable and ultimate end of all men to be saved. But we are ignorant of the way, how to attain it; we mistake the paths that lead thereunto; and therefore the Scripture only giveth us wisdom herein. Furthermore, they are commended from a four-fold effect, *For Doctrine, correction, reproof and instruction in righteousness*, with the consequent thereof, *That the man of God* (even *Timothy*, and such who are in holy Offices of the Church) *may be thoroughly furnished for every good work*. By this we see, what is the Rule a godly man walketh by, it is the *Scriptures*; he believeth according to them, he worshippeth according to them, he liveth according to them. Oh the holinesse and admirable lovelinesse that is in his life, who thus walketh according to Scripture! Oh remember that you have no other Rule to walk by in reference to heavenly things! Thy Religion must be a Scripture-religion, thy faith a Scripture-faith, thy repentance a Scripture-repentance, thy godlinesse a Scripture-godlinesse; else at the day of judgement, thou wilt have that sentence upon thee, which was an hand-writing in the wall against that great King, *Thou art numbered and weighed in the balance, and art found too light and wanting*. But oh the horrible neglect herein! who mattereth what the Scripture saith? Who ordereth his life according to

6. The principles of the carnal, and of the spiritual are contrary.

Of the principles of a godly man.

There are two general principles.

1. There is a principle of knowledge, viz. the holy Scriptures.



to that Canon? What art thou a drunkard by Scripture, a swearer by Scripture? Know assuredly, that he which learneth not holiness from the Scripture, shall never find comfort from the Scripture; that hath precepts as well as promises; and without obedience to one, we cannot reap any comfort from the other.

2. The principle of his acting, viz. the Spirit of God.

Secondly, *The other principle of a godly mans, but efficiently, is the Spirit of God enlightning and sanctifying by the Scripture.* The Word is the Rule, the Spirit of God is the efficient cause; The Scripture is like Christs garment, the Spirit is the virtue and power of God communicated to the soul thereby. Hence are those descriptions of a godly man, that he is *in the Spirit*, that he *liveth in the Spirit*, *walketh in the Spirit*, *is led by the Spirit*; which must not be wrested to any immediate Revelations, and *Enthusiastical motions*, and thereby opposed to the Word, but the Word is subordinate to the Spirit. This is the pool, wherein the Spirit of God descends and vouchsafeth healing to the soul therewith. Now *Chrysostome* maketh this a great part of *Paul's* meaning, he did not *purpose according to the flesh*; that is, he could not dispose of himself, and his journeyes to come and go whither he desired, because he was wholly at the command of the Spirit, to be directed thereby. For we read, when *Paul* had a mind to preach the Gospel in some places, he was hindered by the Spirit, and so could not go; but those directions of the Spirit and Revelations, were extraordinary, and for that present age of the Church, and are not now to be expected: The Spirit doth now enlighten, sanctifie, direct and guide us by Scripture-rules. And hereupon it is, that the godly are said to *be led by the Spirit*, and to *walk by the Spirit*; and this should provoke the godly to all holiness. Oh is pride from the Spirit of God? Is worldliness, is envy, is passion from the Spirit of God? Remember alwayes from what Spirit it is, that thou doest things. The Apostles thought it a good zeal, when they would have fire from Heaven to come and destroy the *Samaritans*, Luk. 9. 55. but Christ rebuked them, saying, *Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of.* Take heed then thy own Spirit, or a deluding spirit be not the principle that moveth thee in st ad of Gods good Spirit. Thus you see the two general Rules, that we should order our lives by; the *Word* and the *Spirit*: whatsoever is not according to these is not suitable to Christianity.

Particular principles.

1. Alwayes to keep a good conscience towards God and man.

Besides these general principles, we may instance in some particulars, that a godly man doth walk by, and against which he dare not sinne. As

1. *To keep a good conscience towards God and man.* *Paul* professed he exercised himself herein (Act. 24. 16.) towards God, therefore he taketh heed of any thing that may make his heart smite him; he had rather have his peace of conscience than all the advantages in the world. Hence in all things his Question is, Will not this trouble my conscience? Will not this disturb the peace of my conscience? This is a blessed principle he keepeth close unto. And then again, in respect of man, he keepeth an inoffensive conscience, he lieth not, he defraudeth not, he injureth not, he looketh to righteousness as well as Religion; his principle is to be holy towards God, and just towards man; and in following this principle, he aboundeth with joy in his heart, he liveth chearfully and fruitfully, and withall doth awe the hearts of the most desperate enemies to the wayes of God.

2. To make sure of his ultimate end, and the necessary means to it.

2. Another principle is, *To make sure of his ultimate end for which God made him, and the necessary means conducing therunto.* His end is glory and salvation hereafter. The necessary means therunto is grace and godlines here, while we are in this world; so that while other men walk according to their several principles, some will be rich, some will have their honours, others their profits; his principle is to be godly here, and saved hereafter. Hence he giveth all diligence to these two things. So that if you ask him, Why are you sollicitous? Why are you so carefull? Why so often in praying, so often in hearing? It is (he saith) to obtain grace here and



and glory hereafter. This I must have, I dare not live and die without it: for want of this principle, men have such sluggish and dull affections to heavenly things.

A third principle is, *To live and walk with daily expectations of death, and the day of judgment*, as it he heard alwayes that voice sounding in his ears, *Arise, and come to judgement*. He desireth to have such thoughts of sinne, as a man dying, as a man arraigned at Gods tribunal would then have. Death is certain, nothing can exempt him from it; and therefore he desireth to die daily, to be preparing for these great changes. *In morte solâ non est fortassis*, as *Austin* observed, In all things in the world there is a *fortasse*, a *may be*. Thou mayest be a rich, thou mayest be a great man, but we cannot say, *It may be thou mayest die*, it *may be the time will come*, when thou shalt fall into the grave. No this is without all doubt: hence the godly mans principle is *so to live, that death and the day of judgement may be no new thing, or terrible dreadfull thing to him*.

3. Daily to expect death and judgement.

A fourth principle is, *To judge sinne the onely, or the greatest evil, and godlinesse the greatest good*. If this were a principle in mens hearts to live by, what reformed persons should we see every where? This principle in thy heart would be like fire there; if sinne be thought worse than any evil, then poverty, shame, misery, yea and hell it self, better be any thing than a sinner. How couldst thou give thy self up a servant thereunto? Though it were a pleasing sinne, a profitable sinne, yet because it is a *damning sinne*, thou wouldst runne from it, thou wouldst say, Oh this sinne, though I love it, though I am used to it, yet it can never be good for me, it will be the poison of my soul! And then on the other side, a godly mans principle is, *That godlinesse is more worth than all the great and glorious things of the world*. His soul longeth for it more than silver and gold; he thinketh every rich man, every great man, a miserable man, if he be not godly. As *Rachel* cried, *Give me children, else I die*; so give me godlinesse, Lord, else I am damned. As *Abraham* did not so much rejoyce in his wealth and outward mercies, because he was still *childlesse*; so saith this man, It is not earthly comforts Lord, but grace that refresheth my heart, let me be poor, contemned, rather than not godly.

4. To judge sin the greatest evil, and godlinesse the greatest good.

*Use of Exhortation*, To examine what are the principles you walk by. There are but these two, and they are contrary one to the other, the *principle of the flesh*, and the *principle of the Spirit*; and such as your principles are, such are ye. If thy principle be to be godly, to live by the Word, to save thy soul, then thou art daily in these things: thy heart is there, thy life is there. But if it be flesh that ruleth in thee, then this maketh thee like a worm and a moal alwayes in the earth. You cannot repent, you cannot believe, you cannot be saved, while these principles abide in you; for they make you prejudiced against godlinesse, they make you neglect repentance. Oh but when thou shalt lie howling and roaring in hell, how wilt thou curse and bewail such principles? These have damned me, these have brought me to this place of torment, I would not entertain other principles.





## S E R M. CXIV.

*Of the kinds and sinfulness of Lying.*

2 COR. I. 17.

*That with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay?*

**I**N these words is the sinne specified, that would flow from those two evil causes named before, *viz. Inconstancy, and corrupt principles.* They that are led aside by these, must needs be liars, and perfidious persons, frothy and vain, to whom no credit is to be given. The Apostle therefore doth here remove the sinne of lying, or saying one thing, and doing another thing; for such an unfaithfull, false man, can never be serviceable unto God: by that uneven carriage of his, he maketh himself incapable of bringing glory to God, and of edifying others.

Concerning the Greek expression, and the interpretation of it, there is great diversity amongst the learned: That which troubleth most, is the gemination of those particulars, *yea, yea, nay, nay.* For we read it as a command and a duty, *Matth. 5. 37. James 5. 12. That our communication ought to be yea, yea, nay, nay;* whereas the Apostle doth here speak of it as a sinne. Some therefore do think that the gemination of the particle crept into the Text by the error of the Scribes, who finding it used in other places, thought it should be here also; and they are the rather induced to this, because in the verse following, the Apostle doth not use the gemination, onely affirming, *Yea and nay.* Others they think that the Greek particle *μή*, which is a note of negation, should be supplied, making it to runne negatively, as if with me were not *yea, yea, and nay, nay.*

But there is no necessity of running unto these harsh remedies, for we may keep the gemination of the particles well enough, as intending thereby a vehement affirmation, and a vehement negation. For so the *Hebrews* use to affirm vehemently, by doubling the word; And our Saviour often useth *Amen, Amen;* which custome also *Heinsius* saith is among the prophane Greek Authours. And thus the sense will be very coherent, *I doe not inconstantly and carnally purpose things; as if I should with great vehemency affirme one thing at one time, and then with as great a vehemency deny it again at another time.* But then we must acknowledge, that this differeth from those places above-mentioned, *Matth. 5. and James 5.* for there the latter *Yea*, and latter *Nay*, is the predicate in the Preposition; here it is the subject, and *Nay, nay* the predicate. In those places also there is a respect had to our speech, as opposite unto oaths; but here is denoted only truth and constancy in our affirmations. *Chrysostome* doth not read the words interrogatively, and thereupon hath a peculiar interpretation, implying the clean contrary to what we have said: For he maketh the meaning to be, as if *Paul* did deny he was constant, or ought to be unchangeable; he was not to have *Yea, yea, nay, nay,* but to be *yea and nay*, as occasion served, because



because he was not at his own disposing, to go whither he would, but was wholly guided by the Spirit of God; and therefore when he attempted to preach in some places, the Spirit of God suffered him not. So that with this Authour, *Paul's* intention should be to remove from himself such a constancy, as if he were to dispose of himself, and to hold to his own resolutions, whereas he was wholly to follow the guide and motions of Gods Spirit. But this seemeth not so proper. The Apostle rather defends himself against the charge of lying and unfaithfull dealing; he was not *Yea and nay*. Hence some make the Latine word *Naucus*, that signifieth a vain, empty, trifling fellow, to come from the Greek words *vai, xi, xk*, but of this more in the following verse. Seeing then that *Paul* doth in this expression free himself from the crime of lying, and saying one thing, but doing the contrary, We may observe,

*That lying, or contrariety between our words and words, or words and actions, are not befitting a Christian, neither are they consistent with godliness.* Lying is not consistent with godliness

A godly man can be no more godly and a liar, than godly and a drunkard, than godly and a prophane person. This sinne the Apostle maketh as a stream to flow from those two poisoned fountains of levity of mind, and a corrupt carnal heart. Now how inconsistent this is with the new man, and the work of grace, you have heard from *Colos. 3. 9*, *Lie not one to another, seeing you have put off the old man with his deeds.* To be *yea and nay*, is to be a liar; and sometimes, as the Apostle supposeth here, we may be very vehement and earnest in our *yea's* and *nayes*, and then we are bold vehement liars. I shall not enlarge my self concerning the whole Theological matter, that may be delivered about a lie, but speak so much as will be for our practical improvement of this truth. And

First, We are to take notice of this, *That there may be a lie materialiter and formaliter.* That is a *material lie*, when we speak that which is untruth; but yet we think it to be a truth, or else we would not speake it. But then that is *formally a lie*, when we affirm that to be true, which we know to be false; and this is directly and properly a lie. Some say, the former is *Mendacium dicere*; the other is *Mentiri*. Now this latter way of speaking untruths, is that which properly is called a *lie*; and men do then formally lie, when they speak that which their consciences doe tell them to be false; yet in some cases, when we speake those things that are untrue, though we thinke them to be so, we are not presently excused from sinne. For in many things, it becometh us to have knowledge, and a right information, before we speak about them. Hence the false Prophets are often called *liars*, who it may be thought they spake what was true, being delivered up by the just judgement of God to *believe a lie*: and therefore we must take heed of rashnesse and suddennesse in our words, that we may alwayes speak that which is consonant to the truth, both *materially* as well as *formally*.

1. There is a material and a formal lie.

Secondly, We may distinguish of lies, as they doe of oaths, There are *Assertory lies*, whereby we affirme things to be so and so; There are also *Promissory lies*, whereby we doe promise to doe such and such things, but afterwards breake these engagements. And the Apostles speech may relate to both these kinds of lies, and both these are sinnes against the second Table; either when we affirme any thing falsly, or perfidiously breake our promises. For seeing words are instituted to signifie our sense and minde to others, if we abuse them to other ends, we doe hereby destroy the end

2. There are assertory and promissory lies.



of speech, and so as much as lieth in us overthrow all humane commerce and society. But in a *Promissory lye*, there is a further aggravation of the sinne, because hereby the rules of justice are broken; for by promise another man cometh to have a right to the thing promised. The *Corinthians* in this Text, had a right to *Paul's* presence, when he had promised them. Now where grace is in a man, that doth so sanctifie him, that he taketh heed of every way of lying, whether in words or promises. It is true, *Aristotle* speaketh of this verity as a moral vertue: And there are some, who have (as it were) a natural justice, their words are as good as oaths, their promises are as good as bonds and bills. Some *Heathens* have been famous for such a truth in their conversation; but yet godlinesse maketh a man keep from lying and falshood upon other grounds, then such natural just men; which is good to be observed. because many are so apt to build the comfort of their souls upon it. For

1. Such natural true men; they are so onely from the *Principles of a natural conscience*, not from the principles of sanctification within them. If you ask them, Why they doe it, or observe the ground, you shall see it is onely because the light of Nature instructeth them herein. And although this be commendable, yet it is not enough to make it godlinesse in them; for what is done in a godly manner, ariseth from a principle of godlinesse, which is the new nature within a man. So that it is one thing to abhorre lying from a meer natural conscience; and another thing to do so from a *supernatural light* within them.

2. You may observe a difference in the motive, *The godly man dares not lie, because God forbiddeth, because it's a sinne that he abominateth*; whereas the *natural true man*, never minds the Scripture; it is not from the word of God that he doth it, but because it is a laudable thing amongst men. They will greatly praise such a man, that is so constant; It's the glory of men they look at, not the command of God.

3. That such men are true and just, but not from a godly principle, is plaine, *Because they doe not receive all other holy duties*. The same God that hath commanded thee not to lie, not to deal falsely, hath also commanded thee not to be drunk; he hath commanded thee to sanctifie the Sabbath, to keep up Family-duties, to love those that are godly, and to delight in such: whereas many times none are more bitter enemies to the power of godlinesse, and the beauties of holinesse, then such natural, just and true men. Oh therefore that such would not stay in that! Thou doest well that thy words are sure, that thy speeches and actions are just; but doe not stay here, doe not thinke thou hast enough for Heaven. For though you doe all these, yet if you delight not in godlinesse, if you love not those that are holy men, if you cannot abide this strictnesse and precisenesse in religious duties, know that thou art but half a Christian yet, there are duties of the first Table, as well as the second, and how greatly mayest thou charge thy soul with such sins, didst thou not put thy trust and hope in thy true and just dealings.

3. There is a pernicious, sporting and officious lie.

Thirdly, Divines do usually speak of a three-fold kind of lying, *There is a pernicious lie, a sporting lie, and an officious lie*.

1. A *pernicious lie* is, when we speak that which is false to the hurt and damage of another.

2. A *sporting lie* is, when we do in merriment affirm things that are false, only to please and delight.

3. An *officious lie*, or *mendacium misericors*, as some call it, a *mercifull lie*, is when we tell a lie, but it is for the good of another, to save him out of danger or death: such was *Rahab's* lie, and the lie of the *Midwives*.



*wives.* For though God rewarded them for the maine, yet it doth not follow he allowed their lie, but pardoned it. It is disputed by some, Whether this be a sinne, or no? And *Luther* is so farre from making it a sinne, that he speaketh of it as a duty (in *Genes.*) And *Musculus* also alloweth of it. Yea (Comment. in *Johan. cap. 8.*) he hath this strange division, *Mendaciorum quidam sunt licita & bona, quidam excusabilia, quidam levia, quidam vitiosa, quidam diabolica.* But certainly, though sporting and officious lies, are not so great sinnes as pernicious, yet they are all intrinsically evil, and so cannot be made good for any advantage of the world. To lie that thou mayest deliver a man from death, is not lawfull, because of the Apostles Rule, *We must not doe evil, that good may come thereof,* Rom. 3. 8. Even as adultery and fornication may not be committed under any pretence whatsoever, no not by a woman, to save the life of her husband; of which case some speak of: So it is also with a lie, being a sinne intrinsically, and of its own nature, and therefore can never be made good. Hence it is, that it is forbidden without any limitation to this lie, rather than another, *Levit. 19. 11.* even as stealing and dealing falsly are. Therefore *Cassianus* is of opinion, That it is lawfull to use a lie, as we doe *Hellebore*, to depell some grievous danger, and that the Patriarchs for this end, did sometimes use lies, is wholly to be exploded. *Plato* was first the authour of this opinion, That Magistrates might use, *Mendacio, ut medicamento,* from whom *Origen* and his followers were infected in this point. But as we heard, every lie, is of its own nature a sinne, because as the Schoolmen say, *It's Actus cadens supra indebitam materiam.* For words are naturally the signe of our meaning, and to use them otherwise is unnatural. And this should make us be the more wary in our ordinary sporting discourses. For how few do attend to this sinfulness of the tongue herein. But if of every idle word, a man shall give an account, then much more of every lying word, though it may seem no such great matter to us. It is certaine, the Martyrs thought no such lies lawfull, no though thereby they might have escaped cruel torments. Yea, they are blotted with ignominy in Antiquity, who either by favour or money would accept of a Certificate or Testimonial, that they had sacrificed at the Altar, when indeed they had not, and thereby preserving themselves. But what gain is this to save a temporal life, and loose a spiritual life?

Fourthly, Whereas sinnes according to Divines are distributed into sinnes of the heart, of the tongue, and of the hand; Cordis, oris & operis, *Lying is a sinne of the tongue.* So that as by the tongue we come to know the disease sometimes of the body that is within; so by the tongue we may discern a sinfull, wicked heart. A lying tongue doth argue a deceitfull heart. So that as the pureness and foulness in the fountain doth quickly empty it self into the streams: Thus as the heart is either holily or sinfully affected, so it emptieth it self into the tongue and hands.

Hence in the fifth place, *All those who would abstaine from the way of lying, must study the spiritual government of the tongue.* Nature indeed hath inclosed it with lips and teeth; but Grace must have a more powerful and predominant curb over it. The Apostle *James* doth notably speak of the sinfulness of the tongue, *James 3. 6.* calling the tongue, though a little member, yet a world of iniquity, an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Certainly, the Apostles zeal discovered in that Chapter against a sinfull tongue, should make us with much diligence watch against it, especially in that it is so unruly, that no man can tame it. Now among many sinfull evils of the tongue, this of lying and falsehood is not the least. So that he who

4. Lying is a sinne of the tongue.

5. They that would not lie must study the government of the tongue.



who hath an holy, meek, just and faithfull tongue, is called by the Apostle a *perfect man*, vers. 2. not but that he hath still much imperfection in him; onely we are so apt to sinne by that, to offend by that. What is in the heart, is so quickly in that, that the Christian hath arrived at a great proficiency in godlinesse, who hath this power over his tongue, Hence *David*, as sensible of this work above his own strength, maketh his earnest addresse in prayer unto God, *Psal. 141. 3. Set a watch (O Lord) before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips.* Grace must be the spiritual porter to watch the mouth, else such sins will come out thereat, that will both greatly offend God and man.

He that would govern his tongue, must first cleanse his heart.

Hence in the sixth place, *That this government of the tongue against lying or any other sin may be attained unto*; it is necessary,

1. *To cleanse the heart*, that is the original and source of all evil; and therefore it is in vain to heal the outwards, unlesse the inwards also be first purged. Therefore *David* in the fore-mentioned prayer, addeth another Petition to the former, *Psal. 141. 4. Incline not my heart to any evil thing.* Therefore when *Solomon* had first given that counsel, *Chap. 4. 23. To keep the heart with all diligence*, then he speaketh of the duties about the eyes, hands and feet. No man can in an holy manner keep his tongue from lying, cursing and swearing, with other sinnes thereof, unlesse he first endeavour that the inward frame of the heart be made pure and holy. *The old man must be put off, and the new man put on*, as the Apostle speaketh, and then we lay aside the way of lying.

The causes of lies.

In the next place, *Let us consider, what are the causes of lying, of yea, and nay.* I doe not mean the general ones, for the Text nameth them to be *inconstancy and a corrupt heart*, but the particular ones. And

1. Natural inclination.

1. Some have a strong inclination and peculiar propensity to it; they love and delight in telling of lies. Yea this lying disposition is noted to be the property of some Countreys; as the Poet said of the *Cretians*, *They were alwayes liars*, *Titus 1. 12.* which witnesse the Apostle saith, is true. And no wonder at this, for the same Apostle maketh it the quality of every man by nature, and that wherein he doth oppose God, whose Attribute is truth, *God is true, and every man a liar*, *Rom. 3. 4.* Seeing then the nature of man is thus prone to it; and some have a more peculiar inclination to it; no wonder if lyes as well as oaths do make a Land mourn. Do we not see it in children, how they are more forward to lie than to speak? They come both together, only lying seemeth more natural.

2. Want of dependance upon God.

A second cause of lying, is want of dependance upon God, as if he would not fulfill his promises without our lies, and unlawfull means that we use. In this *Rebecca* failed, *Genes. 27. 6, 7.* though she knew of Gods promise to *Jacob*, yet because *Isaac's* affections were set upon *Esau* the elder brother, she saw no visible way how the promise should be accomplished, therefore she used lying and dissimulation; but though she got the blessing for her sonne, yet many sad afflictions did befall both her and *Jacob* thereby.

3. Our captivity to Satan.

3. Another cause is, *The captivity and bondage that we are in by nature to Satan*; for he being a liar from the beginning, we imitate him, and follow our father in this particular. This our Saviour telleth the *Jewes*, *John 8. 44. Ye are of your father the Devil; when he speaketh alie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it.* Mark that, the father of it, implying that by the Devil we are solicited, and tempted to lies: and if there were no other consideration but this, it were enough to make us with *David*, *Psal. 119. 163. To abhorre the way of lying*, because it cometh from the Devil, we thereby demonstrate the Devil to be working in us, to move



move our tongues. And truly the name of a lie is a very reproachfull thing: How hardly can men endure the name of it, who yet are constant in the practice of it? So that the reproach, especially the cause from whence it cometh, may persuade us to leave it off, which is hell it self, we shall then quickly hear every man speaking truth with his neighbour.

4. *An inordinate desire of profit and gain, doth many times put men upon lying.* They will commend and praise that, which in their conscience they know to be bad, and all to get a little profit. Thus *Ananias* and *Saphira* they lied to *Paul*, and all to reserve a little profit to themselves.

4. Covetousness

Lastly, *A sinfull and immoderate fear, that many times provoketh to lying.* It was thus with *Abraham* and *Isaac* about their wives, they lied to save themselves out of dangers. And although *David* did abhorre the way of lying, yet we see him in several exigencies degenerate from his principles. It is true, in case of a mans life, to choose rather to die, than to tell a lie, must needs be an argument of heroical grace in a man: but we see in *Peter*, how difficult it is to abstain from lies, when thereby we can preserve our selves out of danger. So that if at any time we find the godly overtaken with this sinne, we must not from thence conclude the lawfulness of it, but rather bewail our proneness thereunto. For if those that are godly in an eminent manner are thus apt to fall, what shall the little Trees do, when the Cedars are so weak?

5. Fear.

*Use of Exhortation,* To take heed of this sinne in a special manner, as being so reproachfull to a man, much more a Christian, so opposite to the Attribute of God, whose faithfulness and truth is so often celebrated, that it is impossible for him to lie: Yea it cometh so immediately from the Devil, that there ought to be no communion with him in this thing. Never call any lie profitable, for it will not prove so at last: What if by it thou escape danger here, and be cast into Hell hereafter? What if thou gaine the world here, and lose thy soule hereafter? Will not this be a dreadfull and dismall lie to thee? Remember that place, *Prov. 12. 19. The lying tongue is but for a moment.* Hence *Prov. 13. 5. A righteous man hateth lying.* For that lying tongue is but for a moment, hereafter it will scorch in hell, it will burne in those eternal flames.





## SERM. CXV.

## G O D is True.

2 COR. I. 18.

*But, as God is true, our word towards was not yea and nay.*

**I**N this Verse the Apostle giveth a reason why he did not use *Lightness*, or purpose things according to the flesh, viz. Because the word he preached was not so much his word, as that which came from God, the Supream truth: and therefore as no Falshood could fall on God, so neither upon his Word that floweth from him. Some indeed understand the Word *Paul* here speaketh of, of his Promise to come to them; as if he did thus solemnly affirm, That he was not unfaithfull in his Promise. But the ensuing words do evidently declare, That he meaneth his Preaching: that his Doctrine was not mutable and changeable; For the malevolent Adversaries that he had to do with, they took occasion from the altering of his purposes, or at least deferring of his Promise in that Particular, about coming to them, to charge his whole Doctrine with the same levity and inconstancy; to bring all he Preached into Question, because of that. Whereupon the Apostle being far more solicitous, for his Doctrine, and his Office, then his own credit, or glory, doth especially fortifie that, and confirm the Truth of that: so that, by this we see the nature of evil men; Whatsoever failings or weaknesses may be in a Minister, they presently charge his doctrine with it, and blame his Ministry; whereas Gods truth is truth, and thou art to receive it, though the Minister may be false, and unworthy: but of this wore in its time.

The Apostles Argument in this Text, to confirm the truth of the Doctrine he preached, is from the truth of God, the measure and Rule of all truth: if his word be a lye, then God must be said to lye, which is heynous blasphemy to speak but *God is true*. This Expression is taken by some to be only Enunciative, and Affirmative, barely asserting the truth of God; as if the meaning were, *God is true, from whom we have received our commission to preach the Gospel, and therefore that also must be true*. Others, (and they speak more probably) take it to be an oath, that the Apostle doth here use a sacred oath, for the confirming of what he saith; and so it is the same with the Hebrews form of an oath, *The Lord liveth*: and Heinsius maketh those expressions, *msds ô 267*, 1 Tim. I. 15. 1 Tim. 4. 9. to be equivalent to this. We take it there to be an oath, but because we have *Paul* using an oath again at the 23<sup>d</sup> Verse, I shall wave that respect at this time, and consider it only enunciatively, attending to that Attribute and Property which this oath is built upon, and that is *Gods truth*, *God is true*.

From whence Observe.

God is true.

*That God is true.*

God



God hath many glorious Attributes : There is his Omniscience, his Omnipotency, his Justice, and his Mercy : and there is also his property of *Truth*, which is of great use and Influence in our comforts and Duties. This *truth of God* is often celebrated in the Scripture : Yea, he is not onely said to be *true*, but *truth* it self, *Dent. 32. 4.* he is so essentially, *truth* it self, that the Word saith, *It is impossible for him to lye*, *Heb. 6. 18.* For, he being *truth* in the abstract, no falshood or lye is compatible with him. Abstractives admit of no mixture, though Concretives may : Light in it self, or whiteness in it self admitteth not of any darkness : but as it is in subjects, so it doth. Now God, as he is said to be *Light*, and *that there is no darkness in him at all*, *1 John 1. 5.* So God is *truth*, and in him there is no falshood at all. But let us discover this Doctrine in particulars. And

First, There is a twofold Truth. *A Metaphysical Truth, and a Morall, or Ethicall truth.* A *Metaphysical truth* is the *truth* of Being, and Entity ; and thus the Scripture doth often celebrate the *truth* of God, making him only to be the *Jehovah* : He is the *ὁ ὢν*, the *Am that I am*. For if that rule be true, *Ens & verum convertuntur*, then, where is the chiefest and Infinite Entity ? there is also the Supreamest Verity. This true being of God is often opposed unto Idols, and the Heathens Gods, which have no true being at all. And that God is true in this sense is the very fundamental Article of all Religion, *Heb. 11. 6.* *He that cometh to God, must believe that he is.* This truth of Gods being is often to be remembred against that Atheisme which doth reign in most mens hearts. How could they live in such excess of riot, did they believe there was a God ? But secondly, there is a *moral or Ethical Truth*, and that is Two-fold, either *Verity* or *Veracity*. *Verity*, is when we speak, or barely affirm that which is true. *Veracity*, is in our Promises, when we faithfully perform them : Now this Twofold *truth* is eminently in God : There is the truth of his assertion, and that is revealed in his Word, which is also called *truth* : So that, whatsoever is affirmed there, can no more deceive us than God himself. And then there is the *truth* of his Promises, and the *Truth* of his Threatnings : the *truth* also of Prophecies, and Predictions, in all which God will be found *true*. When every man is a *Liar*, *God is true* then in what he saith, in what is foretold, in what he promiseth, and in what he threateneth. Never let the prophane and secure sinner flatter himself, hoping it will prove otherwise than the Word speaketh. There is no threatening of God will prove a lye.

1. There is a Metaphysical and a moral Truth.

2. There's a Division of *truth* ; into *truth* increated, and created. *Increated truth* is God himself ; and he is called *truth*, because Gods understanding is the measure and rule of all other Truths. Nothing in the world is *true*, but as it is consonant to his knowledg. It is otherwise with us : Our understanding is not the measure of the truth of things, but there *truth* is the measure and rule of our understandings : then is our knowledg true, when it is conformable to the thing it self ; but then is the thing true, when it is conformeable to the knowledg of God. So that, herein is the Infiniteness and excellency of *Truth*, as it is in God manifested, above that which is in man : So that, man may well, respectively to God, be called a *liar*, *There is no truth in him*. Now, because *truth*, as it is in God, is invisible, and the same with his Essence, and we are never able to cown to know Truth but by God : Hence we have the Scriptures given to the Church, as the *rule of truth*. All *truth* is from God, whether it be natural or supernatural. When any of the Heathens have found out Truth, it was from God, even as all falshood is from the Devil : so that, when the Godly do lye, 'tis from the Devils temptation, the *Father of lyes*. Thus when wicked and ungodly men have uttered *truth*, it hath been of God. Now

2. There is an increated, and created truth.



because Supernatural truth could not be discerned but by Divine Revelation, and patefaction. Hence it pleased God to make known in his Word, What is that truth which will lead us to Salvation: So that, seing we are not able to behold truth, as it is in God, we must look upon it as it is in his Word; for God is the hidden Truth, as it were; the Word is the revealed truth: Therefore whatsoever is Scripture, we may conclude of it as sure and firm Truth, coming from the supream truth. If then, ye ask, as *Pilate* did another way, *What is truth?* I answer thee, *The Scripture is truth.* No men are true, any further than guided by Scripture, and led by the Spirit of God accordingly. Oh that therefore you did more aw your hearts with the truth of Gods Word! If that say, sin will be bitter in the latter end, though it may bring profit and pleasure for a while, believe it against all the wicked men in the world, and say, I do more believe this Text, this Place of Scripture, than all which the wickedness of men may oppose against it.

3. In that God is true, he differeth from men and devils

3. In that God is true, *Herein he differeth from man; and is thereby opposite to the Prince of darkness.* He differeth from man: Therefore it is said, *Numb. 23. 19. God is not as man, that he should lye or Repent.* To trust in man, is to lean upon reeds. Yea, hence it is, that because God only is Truth, no Pastors or Officers in the Church are to be believed any further than they bring the Word of God: It was Christ alone, God and man, that could say, *I am truth.* Neither *Austin*, nor *Luther*, nor *Calvin* can say, *I am truth*: Not that therefore the Ministers of God are therefore to be laid aside, because they are not infallible: For God hath commanded us to hear them, and to submit to them; only we are not ultimately to depend on them. The Church is called the *Pillar of truth*, because she doth declare and hold out the Truth, but, she is not the Author of it. We are then to conclude of all men, that of themselves they have no Truth; they need the Spirit of God to guide them therein: And then hereby is an Opposition in God to the Devil: As God is true, so the Devil is the Father of Lies, *John 8. 44. when he speaketh of his own, he speaketh a lye.* Now then consider, how inexcusable every wicked man will be. For, on the one side, Christ, who is Truth it self, he speaketh to the sinner, to repent, to reforme, promising Everlasting Happines to him: Christ saith, Thy sinnes have no pleasure, no profit in them; thou wilt finde them prove a lye to thee. On the other side: The Devil he tempteth thee, contrary to Christ, he telleth thee sin is sweet, it is good and profitable to sin, he biddeth thee follow the lusts of thy soul, thou shalt not be damned for all that: and now thou believest this Devil, this Father of lies, rather than Christ. Oh how unsufferable is this? how great is the Patience of God towards thee? What, hearken to the Devil, before God? But even thus *Eve* did at first; she believed the Serpent more than God, and thereby brought ruine upon her self, and posterity. Oh that we could convince you enough herein, that you may see, with what madness and folly your sinnes carry you away, while you listen to the Father of Lies, who is the Adversary of your soules, rather than Christ, who mourneth over you, saying, Oh that such a sinner did know the things that maketh for his peace!

4. 'Tis because of Gods truth that we are commanded to believe, and trust in him,

4. From this truth of God, Hence it is, that we are so much commanded in Scripture to believe on him; to trust in him, and to depend upon him: which indeed is a quiet and blessed life. For what is that maketh thy heart like a bell? What is it that causeth one wave to rise up after another in thy soul? Is it not because thou dost not depend upon this truth of God? Were thy soul more assured herein, the frame of thy spirit would be more joyfull. Two Temptations amongst others there are, wherein the soul cryeth out, as in a whales belly, not knowing what to do: whereas the confidence of Gods truth would presently satisfie the soul. The first is, In matters to be believed about the



the Doctrine that is delivered there: For, because that is wholly *supernatural* above our humane reason, though not contrary to it; hence it is, that we have many fluctuations of spirit, and our understandings are with difficulty captivated unto the Word of God. Though these temptations about the Truths of Christian Religion are not incident to all the Godly; and it is a special mercy to be preserved from them, yet upon some they have come like a violent storm, and therefore there is no way to stand disputing, and arguing, but to say, *God is true, the Word is true, I believe*, when I cannot dispute, as one Martyr said. But then a Second temptation, which is like a continual thorn in the sides of the Godly, is their *Diffidence and distrust about the Promises of God*. They do not live and walk, as if they were true: So that never did any Heretick more subtilly cavill against the Doctrine of the Scripture, than they do argue against the Promises of the Scripture, Whether they be such as belong to the Church, or to themselves; To the Church, when they read the Scriptures, they finde such glorious and excellent *Promises*; that they expect she should alwayes have *Halcyon* dayes, that her enemies should alwayes be vanquished: but alas, they finde experimentally the contrary: They cannot see, how Gods Words, and his Works, how his Promises and Providences do concur together: But the reason of this is from themselves. They do not take a right way to understand the truth of God in this particular, for these three Causes, which commonly make the sense to erre about the Object (although, to speak properly, the sense doth not erre, but the judgment of a man, discerning according to sense, for sense would be more properly said to erre, if under such impediments it did not represent as it doth.)

First, One impediment in the sense, is *the two long distance of the Object from the eye*: (to instance in this sense,) As we judg the Sun less than the earth, because of the vaste distance from us; so that, till a man take Astronomical Instruments, and correct Sense by Art, he misjudgeth about the Suns magnitude: thus is it here, When we go to judg of Gods Promises to us, or his Church, we finde not the truth of them, because the wayes of God are too remote from us, his thoughts exceed ours, as much as the Heavens do the earth. Therefore we must necessarily erre, till we go to the Scripture; that is, as it were, the Artificial Instrument, whereby we are able to behold that truth in Gods proceedings, which otherwise we could not.

A Second Impediment is, the *medium indispositum*, when the means of seeing is Indisposed; as when we look upon a stick in the waters, or the Sun through a dark cloud. Thus, many times, when we judg of Gods proceedings according to his Promises, we look through False *mediums*, we think according to the Principles that men would do in the world, as Luther said, *We would think that God should destroy Pope and Turk immediately*: but all this is because we look through an indisposed glasse in this particular.

Lastly, The eye cannot judg right of its Object, when *the visive faculty is disturbed*, when that is infested with any evil humors. Thus the spiritual eyes even of a Godly man are in some measure vitiated, and therefore are not able to behold that glory of God in carrying on the Affairs of his Church, and by those very wayes which we would think tend to the destruction of the things promised, by them he doth fulfill them; for *the wayes of the Lord are wonderfull to us*, in making good his Promises, and commonly they are fulfilled by those means which seem contrary to them; even as he cured the blinde man, by mingling spittle with clay, which he laid upon his eyes. And thus the Godly soul may finde, how God is true in spiritual Promises to his soul; for he obtaineth comfort through desertions; the way to Heaven he findes through Hell: yea, in sanctifying Grace, he cometh to higher Degrees in Grace, even by his Failings. So true is that of  *Suarez*,



*Aliquando substractio gratie est ad finem gratie.* The end of Grace is accomplished by the gradual substruction and suspension of Grace for a time. But I must not enlarge herein.

5. The truth of God is the Foundation of all Religion and godliness.

Lastly, *This truth of God is the foundation of all Religion and Godliness.* For, if there were no truth in the Scriptures, which are Gods truth, if there were no truth in the Promises or Threatnings, into what a Chaos and Confusion of wickedness would all men fall? There would be no difference between Hell and this World: So that Gods Truth is a Foundation of all Piety in these three wayes;

First, *The truth of God in his Doctrine delivered to the Church, is the foundation, yea, the Essence and soul of his Church.* In this it doth differ from *Jews, Turks, and Pagans*; yea, from all Heretical Societies, That she hath the *truth of God*, and others not: So that, as the soul keepeth the body from rottenness, and Putrefaction. Thus also the truth of God keepeth the Church from being only a Carcase, or to have the Name and Title of a Church, without the thing it self.

Secondly, *The truth of God in his Promises is the great supporter of the hopes of all the Godly.* By them alone they are enabled to walk with *Peter* upon the water, and sink not, because they believe Gods Promises to be true; they do therefore renounce all unlawfull Pleasures and Profits; they will not leave the fatness and sweetness of them to go to those bryars.

Thirdly, *The truth of God in his threatnings*; That is like a fiery sword, to keep them from all evil: They know those threatnings are true, and that the World and the Devil prove lyars to all those that serve them; therefore they awe their hearts with a continuall fear of them. And certainly, if every wicked man would remember this, That Gods threatnings are true, they will be made good; no wisdom, no greatness, no power can resist him. For, how can the stubble withstand the consuming fire? this would make them utterly forsake their sinnes. But whether thou wilt believe or no, Gods Curses will fall upon thee. For there is this difference between the Promises and Threatnings; The Promises (many of them) are not made good unto them, unless thou do believe; believe, and thy sinnes are forgiven thee, but the threatnings will be made good to thee, a prophane sinner, whether thou wilt or not. Gods Word will have its effect, though thou dost desire it might be false.



## SERM. CXVI.

*The personal failings of Ministers are oft cast upon the Ministry it self.*

2 COR. I. 18.

*But, as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.*

**T**He next particular considerable is the occasion of that Transition, which the Apostle maketh from the word of his Promise in particular, to come to them, and the word of his Preaching in the general. The occasion is from that evil, and malevolent Disposition which was in his Adversaries, who from any, either real, or but supposed Imperfections in other things, would presently burden his Ministry with it, and thereby, as much as in them lieth, make *Paul* wholly useless in the Church of God. Now, because this is the continual stratagem, which the Devil useth to make the best Ministry ineffectual, and because it is the constant inclination of wicked men to do so, therefore I shall pursue this Observation.

*That there is a propensity in wicked and evil minded men, to cast all the imperfections of the Ministers of the Gospel upon their Ministry and Doctrine.*

Wicked men usually cast the Imperfections of the Minister upon the Ministry.

To bring the Truths they Preach either into doubt or disesteem, because of some failings, yea, though they be not real, but supposed in their own Imaginations. Thus the Adversaries of *Paul*, they did captiously lay hold upon his Promise, and failing as they think in that, thereby they would render all his Doctrine and Ministry odious. that thereby their falsehoods and corruptions may have the greater success. Thus the wickedness of ungodly men doth constantly bend to this, that they may be hardened in their hearts against the Word Preached; that they may fortifie themselves with some damnable Principles of others, that so the message of the Lord may be rejected.

Now to illustrate this, consider these particulars;

First, *That when a Minister either preaches false Doctrine, or liveth scandalously, or is lazy, and negligent in his place, then it is lawfull for a people to have an holy and wise zeal against such persons, that they may be quickened up to their duties.* Neither is this to be an enemy to the Office of the Ministry, or to endeavour the publique Dishonour of it, but rather to advance the honor of it, who by Heretical Superstitions, or scandalous manners is made contemptible to the people for Doctrine. If that which men preach, be errors, or falsehoods be the Imaginations of their own hearts, as the false Prophets did lies in the Old Testament, and, as many are said to do in the New; from such we are commanded to turn away; with such we are not

1. A people may have an holy Zeal against a loose scandalous Minister.



so much as to learn any familiar commerce, no not so much as to bid them, *God speed*. The Champions of *Rome*, they condemn the Protestants, for their Schisme and Faction they made against the Officers of their Church; but they proved that they were Apostatical, not Apostolical; that they were wolves, not shepherds: yet, at the same time, they affirmed diligently, the Ministry of Christ, according to his Institution, against any fanatical Spirits that did run into that extremity: So, if a Minister live a wicked, and a *scandalous* life, though we are not to reject the sound Doctrine, because of his life, yet that ought to be a great grief and trouble to us. We are not to approve of a wicked life for the Ministers sake, nor to make good Sermons cover the multitude of many sinnes: Nay, the more excellent his doctrine is, and the more raised his parts are, the more is his life, if wicked, to be abominated. It is true, people are very injudicious herein, and are very prone to condemn the Office, because of a wicked life; but that is not to be done, we are to *hear them*, as our Saviour said of some Pharisaical Doctors, but not to *do as they do*, Mat. 23. 3. *all that the Scribes and Pharisees bad them doe, sitting in Moses his chair*; that is, while preaching consonantly to *Moses* his Doctrine, and not adding their superstitious leaven, they were bidden to *observe*, but then they are forbidden to *follow their example*; *They must not do as they do*. So that what Truths such Preach out of Gods Word, we are to awe our hearts with them, and to receive them as good truths; but yet, if their lives be contrary to Gods Word, they must not approve of them, or imitate them. Lastly, If they be *negligent* and *lazy*, which is an intolerable sin in a Minister, whose Names and Titles the Scripture giveth him, denoteth Labour, Pains, and Solitude, This also may be justly complained of, and yet not in that to be thought to strike at the Office of the Ministry. Now, there are two Extreames in this way: Some corrupt and scandalous Ministers would make the world believe, when judged or censured, for their crimes, that it is because of their Office, not their unworthiness; that it is not their personal sin, but Ministerial employment that is aimed at. And again, there are others, that though they pretend the sinnes and vices of Ministers, yet indeed are glad of any such offences, do rejoyce, when they fall out, and make occasion thereby as much as lyeth in them, to overthrow the Ministry it self: But, both these delude their own soules; for God will own his instituted Office, as being a Plant of his own planting; and therefore, the Adversaries to it may think as well to pluck the Sun out of the Heavens, as those Offices Christ hath set in his Church: And on the other side, unfaithfull and ungodly Ministers are to know Gods anger is more against them, than other wicked men, and the very station they had in the Church, will tend to their greater aggravation, So that, we may distinguish between setting our selves zealously against the corruptions of unjustifiable Ministers, and against the Office it self.

2. A people  
are oft prone  
to take offence  
at the  
Ministers  
when yet 'tis  
their sin.

In the next place, Secondly, *Many wayes are a people prone to take offence, at the Ministry of a man, when yet it is their sin*. They that do wickedly take an offence at a Ministry faithfully discharged; they procure inevitable ruine to their own soules. These endeavour to put out the Light of the Sun, that so they may with the more boldness commit their sinnes in the dark. There is a two-fold Scandal, or Offence, (as Divines usually note.) The one is, *Scandalum datum*, when any shall give a just occasion to any, to stumble at the Truths of God, and to depart from the way of Christ: Not, that ever any can have a just occasion indeed. For, suppose, all the Ministers of Christ, yea, and all the people that profess Christ, should so live and walk, that Christianity would be made loathsome in the world, yet a man ought not to be offended hereat, so as to depart from Christ: for he is to believe



believe the Word more than the lives or Examples of men; only I call that a *just occasion*, which is apparently so; when some do carry themselves in such an ungodly manner, that the weakness of some cannot but be offended at their proceedings; so that, they like Ministry and Godliness, the worse, for their sakes. Now, though this be the sin and weakness of any to do so, yet, because they admitted an active occasion thereunto, a wo is pronounced in an heavy manner to such Persons, *Luke 17.1.* The Scripture maketh it a terrible thing, either for Ministers or people, so to live and walk, as, that thereby the wayes of God, and Godliness may be evil spoken of. But then, there is a *scandalum acceptum*, which is called *Scandalum Pharisaorum*; and that, when men through their own ignorance, peevishness, or wickedness, do take any offence, and cry out of Religion, because of such and such things, which they do not rightly understand: And this was the case of our Saviours Preaching, and his acceptance in the world; insomuch, that he saith, *Mat. 11.6, Blessed is he that shall not be offended at me.* Why, was there any thing in Christs Doctrine or Life, that might rationally offend any? No, but the Pharisees, and others, being Superstitious and proud, seeing also his outward contemptibleness, took great offence; and thereupon they condemned Christ by the Law, which God made against Blasphemy: They condemned Christ, by that very Law, which was in force against Blasphemers, thinking him guilty of it, because he said, *He was the Son of God*, *John 10.7.* Now, the many wayes that may be taken sinfully, to set against the Ministry, and to lay all the Burden upon that, are,

First, *when we, out of a cavilling and quarrelling temper, dislike that, which if well understood, would be of great use to us*; So that, many times, when the whole fault lieth upon our dulness, our mistakes, our Ignorance, and weakness, we are ready to charge it upon the Ministry. Thus we have heretofore instanced in *John 6. 60, 61.* concerning those Disciples, who murmured at Christs Expressions; and were so offended, that they departed wholly from him: So that, he who would not go off from the Ministry, is to avoid a quarrellsome, cavilling disposition; which some are very prone unto; but, it is a very great Judgement to be left to such a temper; For herein they do every day more and more obstruct their own Conversion, and prepare themselves to be combustible matter in Hell. Indeed, a modest, and humble enquiry into the Truths preached, as the *Bereans* did, about *Pauls* Preaching, is allowed and commendable; but, a froward, cavilling Disposition indisposeth to finde out the Truth, and is like some fretting humour in the eye, which hindreth the sight.

1. When they dislike that, which may be of great use.

2. *We then do sinfully oppose the Ministry, when we strive and contend with them, because of their zealous and faithfull reproveing and withstanding the course of sin.*

Because a Minister would bring thee to the sight of thy finnes, to a deep and serious Humiliation, because of them, because he would recover thee out of those damnable wayes thou livest in: Hence it is, that thou cryest down the Ministry, and their Labours: This is the true ground of most mens calumny, and malice; because the word Preached is a convincing Word, a reproveing Word, a discovering Word, of that evil and wretchedness, which is in thy heart: Hence it is, that thy soul cannot endure the messengers thereof; This is not merely to be wicked, but Diabolically wicked. And yet, if many Despisers of the Ministry were asked, What is it that moveth them to such despite against the Officers of Christ, they would, but for shame, speak that which lieth in the bottome of their heart, *viz.* That the Ministry discovereth unto them all the evil they have done; That is, speaketh onely evil and Damnation to them, and therefore they cannot abide it; but, wo be to that man who striveth with a Minister, doing his duty. That, because he telleth thee the

2. When they are offended at his reproveing sin.



the truth, he dealeth faithfully with thy soul; therefore thou dost become an enemy to him. Consider that place, *Hes. 4. 4.* *Let no man reprove another, for this people are as they that strive with the Priest.* The meaning is, It is to no purpose, to reprove the wicked men of *Israel* any more: it is to no purpose to bring them balme, or spiritual Medicines, for they are an incurable people, Why, how doth this appear? In that, *they strive with the Priest.* They will not let him do his duty. If he reprove them for sin, if he set against their iniquities, they rise up as proudly against him, as the *Sodomites* did against *Lot*, their Preacher of righteousness. By this you see, its a property of a desperate and incurable people when they strive with their Church-Officers, in doing of their Duty. Indeed, if Ministers should pervert the Ordinances of God, endeavour to bring in Heresies, Superstition, and Prophaneness, to exalt the Kingdome of darkness, then they are in all lawfull and wise wayes to strive with them, even as Children may, in some cases reprove their Parents, who are desperately set to damn their soules, provided they shew that Reverence and Humility that they ought to do. This Text of the Prophet is made use of by the Papists, who charge our Reformers, that they did strive with the Pope, and their Bishops, refusing submission to them. For their Canonists have a saying, *That, if the Pope should draw thousands of soules to Hell, none might say unto him, why dost thou so?* But this place will not be a Sanctuary to them; for if we take the ordinary exposition, and common one, which I have given (there being another by-Learned man, who maketh directly against them) it speaketh of such a people, who, do sinfully strive with the Messengers of God, because they reprove sin, and zealously do their Duty. This is the highest Degree of sinfull Opposition that can be, no contending with the Ministry is so heynous, as when it cometh upon this account. These are like frenetique men, who fight with their Physician. In other diseases commonly men send for physicians, they desire their help; but the mad man, he will ne re send for any, and if any be brought to him he rageth at them. Thus doth such wicked men, and so are like a ground Historians speak of, that is dryer by the rain that falleth upon it, and the more drought, the more moysture.

3. When they cast the faults of the persons upon their Office and Doctrine.

3. *Then we sinfully reflect upon the Ministry, when the vices of the persons, we cast upon their office and Doctrine.* This was that which made *Paul* so diligent and zealous in this Text; had it been his own glory and name, he would more patiently have borne it. But when they come hereby to disparage his Doctrines, to call that in question, then he could no longer bare it. Take heed then of this disposition, upon any evils, or failings in them, presently to fall upon the Calling, immediately to dislike the Doctrine they preach. For, though it ought not to be so, yet we are naturally ready *ex personis probare fidem*, not *ex fide Personas*, We are ready to like and approve of Faith, as we approve of mens persons, and therefore, if any failing or weakness be seen in them, we presently charge their Doctrine with it. What should a man have refused all that *Peter* said, thinking, it is no matter what he Preacheth, because, in his fear and temptation he denied Christ? What, shall a man exclaim at *Paul*, and say, we know not how to believe, what he Preacheth? For, he was once as hot and zealous for the contrary way. Oh, take heed of such ungodly Judgment. The Truth is Christs Truth; the Gospel is the Gospel of God, however men may fail.

4. When they refuse the Ministry upon false Rumors and Surmises.

4. *This is still the more abominable, when men take false rumors and slanders up, or go upon their own surmises, and conjectures, and thereby refuse the Ministry: for this was Pauls case.* He had just grounds, as is in time to be shewed, why he did not come to them, as he promised. *It was to spare them*, as he saith, *v. 23.* So that, if there were any fault, they were the cause of it, yet, how readily do they make an occasion, to bring *Pauls* Doctrine out of credit, and nothing is more ordinary than this, for men to feign Reasons, and pretend many absurd Arguments to vilifie the work of the Ministry, which yet is appointed by God, for



for the good of their sou's. If you ask, What are the Reasons, why men are so apt to carnal failings upon the Doctrine preached? They are such as these;

1. *Wicked men being under the power of the Devil, they are acted by him, and his works they do.* Now, his greatest work is to destroy that, which if suffered, would destroy him, and his Kingdome. The end of the Ministry we may read in Pauls Commission, *Act. 26. 18.* which is, *To open mens eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.* It is no wonder, if the Devil in all ages tempt men to this sin, rather than others. For, hereby his Kingdome will be lift up: so that, as the *Physicians* were never quiet till they had deprived *Sampson* of that which was his strength, so neither is the Devil and his instruments ever at rest, till they have removed that strength Christ hath appointed for the destroying of the works of the Devil.

2. *Men are carryed out against the Doctrine and Office, for any real or supposed failings, because it is that which doth most grieve and trouble them.* It is the Word of God that is a terrour to them, that will not let them sin securely; therefore they have no care to take, but, as much as lieth in them, to make it no word, to make it nothing but the humours of men. For all the while they believe this is the Doctrine of God, this will reprove me, this will damn me, they dare not, they cannot rise up against God; but to delude their soules, therefore they run to lies, and finfull refuges, whereby they would undervalue this Word, and make it nothing but the Opinions of men.

3. *They fall foul upon the Doctrine presently, because herein they think they do the greater despite to the faithfull Ministers of God.* Herein they think the more to afflict them; they know, that no glory, honour, or profit doth so much prevail with him, as the honour of his Office, and the truth of his Doctrine: and therefore, that they might shew their mischief, and malice the more, they wound him in that which is dearest.

4. *They condemn the Doctrine from personal failings, because, herein they think to justify themselves the more.* That there is no such reason why it should be powerfull to reforme, or convert them, seeing it doth not so to the Minister himself: They think, they have a good plea for their unprofitableness, and unfruitfulness. If he be a Physician, say they, Why doth he not heal himself? if he can save others, why doth he not save himself? as they derided Christ.

*Use of Exhortation,* To observe, and take notice of this subtilty of *Satan*, and the naughtiness of thy own heart, in this particular. Are not all his workings to prejudice thee against the faithfull Pastor of thy soul? Doth not every tale or story; doth not every slanderous and lying report, presently take off thy Faith, and reverence to the word that is preached? Oh remember, that it is Gods word, it is Gods truth, whatsoever our failings may be; its Gods treasure, though it be in an earthen vessel. It will be no excuse for thee, at the day of judgment, to say, Lord, I regarded not the word, I mattered not Sermons, I attended not to what they Preached, because I thought the Messengers thereof were proud, and covetous. Will not God arraign thee? saying, *It was my Word howsoever, It was my Doctrine: my word was not proud, or Doctrine Covetous; if not for their sakes, yet you should have received it for my sake: It was not the Ministers Doctrine, the Ministers Sacrament, but mine.* The Devil is very busie to destroy thee by this temptation; but watch and pray against them.





## S E R M, CXVII.

*Of Changing in Matters of Religion.*

2 C O R. I. 18.

*Our word toward you, was not yea, and nay.*

**W**E are now arrived at the last particular considerable in this Text, and that is the firmnesse and constancy of the Doctrine that *Paul* preached to the *Corinthians*. You heard that malevolent adversaries from a supposed levity in *Paul*, otherwise did presently argue to an inconstancy in his Doctrine. And although this was but once, they could not charge such an appearing levity upon *Paul* often. It was but at one time, yet how ready were they to take an advantage hereby against Gods truth. It is true, the verity and firmnesse of Gods truths doth not depend upon the esteem of Ministers, his word is sure, though men be vain and inconstant; yet by this instance we see, how much it concerneth the Ministers of the Gospel to abound in gravity, sincerity and constancy; especially so to deport themselves, that the Doctrine they preach may not be suspected of changeablenesse, as if they would preach that for Gods truth one time, which afterwards they would preach to be the Devils lie. This is that which *Paul* doth here renounce, *Our word toward you* (saith he) *was not yea and nay*, that is, it was not light, mutable, it was not white and black, hot and cold, but it was alwayes the same constant abiding truth. From whence observe,

'Tis a great  
reproach for a  
Minister to be  
mutable and  
contradictory  
in his doctrine

*That for a Minister to be mutable and contradictory in his Doctrine, is very reproachfull to him, and makes his Ministry wholly uselesse.*

Sometimes to preach one way, as the way of God; one opinion as the certain truth of God, and then afterwards to preach up the clean contrary, this debaseth the person, and the office of a man, it maketh all his Ministry to be despised: They conclude either that such a man thinketh there is no Religion at all, or at least, that he is either *Atheistical*, believing none, or else very ignorant, or carnal, and self-seeking; that with *Demetrius* the priest of *Diana's* Temple, doth judge that only Religion, which is profitable, and therefore measure the truths of Doctrines by their interest and carnal emoluments. In the Old Testament we read of many such lying Prophets, who did not prophesie according to the visions of the Lord, but from the imagination of their own hearts, preached to Kings and people such pleasing things as they desired. This hath done a world of hurt in the Church of God, when the officers therein have not regarded, whether the things they preach were Gods truths, but whether pleasing to men, or no. This was to make the Sunne to follow the Dial, and the truth of God shall no longer be



be truth, but while it pleaſeth man. Now ſuch men, that are thus mutable, muſt needs be accounted tranſgreſſours by all. For ſo ſaith the Apoſtle, *If I build the things againe, I once deſtroyed, I make my ſelfe a tranſgreſſour.* Galat. 2. 18. This Doctrin deſerveth ſerious examination, becauſe as there is much truth in it, and thereby much good may be done: So occaſionally through miſtake, men may be prejudiced to their own hurt. For did not the Papiſts brand the Reformers at firſt with inſtancy and perfidiouſneſſe, that they were nothing but *Yea* and *Nay*? For formerly they came to the Maſſe, they worſhipped Images, they acknowledged the Pope as well as they: But then of a ſudden they were all changed, then the Pope was *Antichriſt*, then the *Maſſe* was *blaſphemous Idolatry*, then they pulled down their *Altars* and *Images*. Thus ſay the Papiſts, they were *yea* and *nay*. And in our age, Are there not many offended, becauſe the Miniſters of the Goſpel do not keep up the ſame Church-adminiſtrations, as they once did, that they do not pray, baptize, adminiſter the Lords Supper, in the ſame way as once they did? If it was no ſinne then, why is it now? Thus they think there is much inſtancy and levity in Miniſters, becauſe they ſee ſuch changes and alterations in their publick adminiſtrations.

Let us therefore abide the longer upon this truth, ſeeing the Text doth give ſuch reaſonable advantages thereunto. And

First, You muſt know, *That all yea and nay is not bad.* There may be a time, when he that hath been for a *Yea* a long time in Religion, muſt if ever he will be ſaved, come to a *Nay*. There is ſometimes a neceſſity of changing, and that is, when people and Miniſters have been carried away with errors and falſe wayes. Though ſuch things may plead antiquity, though you may urge preſcription for many hundred years, yet upon conviction and illumination, we are to *change* from *yea*, we are to bewail ſuch errors as we once lived in. Was it not thus with *Paul*? Though *Paul* was not now *Yea* and *Nay*, ſince he was an Apoſtle, yet he was once ſo; neither was that to his diſpraiſe; but his honour in the Church of God. Did not *Paul* once violently perſecute that way, which afterwards he preached for? Thoſe traditions and phariſaical ſuperſtitious which once he maintained, even to the killing of all the oppoſers thereof; Doth not he in time, with as much zeal renounce them, as ever once he did plead for them? This change of *Paul* was ſo wonderfull that *Act. 9. 21.* *Many who heard him preach Chriſt, were amazed, ſaying, Is not this he, that deſtroyed them, who called on this Name in Jeruſalem?* You ſee then that there may be a juſt occaſion to change our opinions, our practices in Religion. There is a juſt occaſion for a *Jew*, a *Turke*, to leave his Religion, and become a *Chriſtian*. There is a juſt occaſion for Papiſts and Hereticks to forſake that way of worſhip, they have followed with ſo much zeal and devotion. Neither may they fear the ſhame and reproach of being accounted *weather-cocks* and *turn-coats*; but rather they have cauſe to bleſſe God, who hath opened their eyes, and not ſuffered them to periſh in the *Egypt* and *Sodome* they were in. It is true naturally, it is accounted an hainous ſinne to *change* that Religion which a man is born and bred up in. Therefore we have an Hiſtory of our King *John*, (*Fuller. Hiſtor. of the Church*) who being in great State-extremities, ſent to the King of the *Moors* for aid and aſſiſtance, promiſing him his Kingdom if he would, and that the Nation ſhould receive the *Turkiſh Religion*. But the *Morocco* King reſuſed the offer, ſaying, *That he had lately read Paul's Epiſtles, and did like the matter well, ſo that he found no fault with Paul, but becauſe he changed the Religion he was born in.* I bring this inſtance to ſhew, what a great influence that Religion hath, let it be falſe or true, upon a man, in which he hath been educated. Yet there is a neceſſity, if men will be ſaved, ſometimes of forſaking that Religion our Fathers and



Ancestours have lived in. For seeing that is directly against Scripture, that *any man in any Religion may be saved*: and also that seeing there are so many contrary Religions in the world, it followeth inevitably, that there are some in such damnable wayes, and that of Religion, that without repentance, and coming out of those former impieties, they shall never escape the eternal flames of hell; and such a change is not matter of reproach, but it is the wonderfull conversion of Gods grace upon our hearts. Hence the Apostle doth so often admire the riches of Gods grace to those *Heathens*, who were delivered out of that ignorance and darknesse, with the abominable impieties they once lived in. As it is in Philosophy, they distinguish of alteration or change, it is either *destructiva* or *perfectiva*. Thus when a man of a fool is made wise, of a vicious person, virtuous, here is a perfective alteration: so it is also in the matters of Religion, we may change the best error for truth, darknesse for light. It is not then enough to say, Thou wilt not change thy principles, thy way of Religion, thou hast been born in them, and thy Ancestours have lived in the same way; for this every *Jew*, every *Turke* may plead as well as thou. The *Heathens* pleaded this against the Christian Religion, *Sequendi sunt patres qui feliciter sunt suos sequuti, contumeliosa est emendatio senectutis*. If this be true, why art thou not a Papist still? Why dost thou not call for the Masse and Church-duties to be done in *Latine*? For this was the way thy Ancestours were brought up in.

2. But 'tis a sin and reproach to change from the truth

Hence in the second place, *It is not simply the Yea and Nay that is to be blamed, but when it is in the truth, when we ought to be constant and immoveable therein*. As every party doth brand another with Heretick, Schismatick, Apostate, so also with inconstancy; but it is not the meer names, but the reality that maketh such persons. If then a man holds Gods truth, he is no Heretick, though the whole world should condemn him. He that hath a Scripture-ground to depart from the Idolatries of the Church, is no Schismatick, though others charge him with it, for *Causa non separatio facit Schismaticum*. Thus if a man forsake his former errors, his former superstitions; if he leave his corrupt Doctrines, this mans change is a duty, he is not to be blamed for it; but if a man leave the truth, if he forsake the way of God, then his *Yea and Nay* is to be reproved. If then you see a man, leaving one opinion after another, one practice after another, so that all this while it is a progresse in the truths of Christ, this man is the more to be encouraged. For such is the pertinacy of man, and love to his owne credit and glory, that it must be some great cause, which shall make him retract and recant that which he did once zealously professe; so that it is in Doctrinals, as in morals; if you see a man that hath for many years wallowed in his lusts, that hath been glewed to them, so that he appeared, *Non tam peccator, quam ipsum peccatum*; if this man through the grace of God be converted do contrary to all that once he did, shall this man be derided, because he will not be the same prophane person, that once he hath been? No, God rather is to be glorified; who made the prodigal that was lost to be found, that was dead to live again?

3. Even such a change supposeth imperfection.

Thirdly, *Although thus to increase in knowledge and light, whereby we leave off doing the things we once did, be thus a duty, yet even such a change supposeth an imperfection in a man*. For were our understandings fully illuminated, we should be able to see the truths of God, at the very first; light would not come in successively upon us, and by degrees dispelling darknesse, as we see the Sunne doth in the morning, but it would be in its vertical point immediately. Even as *Photius* reporteth out of an Historian *Agatharcides*, that there are a people to whom the Sunne doth not appear by degrees, as to us, but it cometh suddenly and perfectly upon them, out of the depth of



of darknesse. It is true therefore our weaknesse and imperfection, not that we come to know things better than we did, or that we are changed, but because we needed such an alteration: *We know but in part*, saith the Apostle, 1 *Corinth.* 13. putting himself into the number. Hence it is that in Heaven, when our understandings shall be fully perfected, then we shall not grow in knowledge, we shall not imbrace errors, and upon further illumination leave them. So that whensoever God shall make such a change upon us, that we are not to believe, as we have done, worship as we have done, lived as we have done: As we are to be thankfull unto God, so we are to be humble in our selves, because that ever any darknesse did take hold of us. The *Thomists* among the Schoolmen, give this for a reason, why the good Angels proved constantly good, and the evil Angels unchangeably evil: *Because* (say they) *Such is the perfection of the Angelical Nature, that what it willeth, it willeth immoveably, it cannot alter again, and therefore an evil Angel cannot repent.* I shall not justifie this reason; but certainly we see it a glorious perfection in God, that his understanding is infinite, his will immutable; so that he cannot know any new thing, or will any new thing, which he did not from eternity: Yea the estate of the glorified Saints in Heaven, is admirable in this particular, that they are so confirmed by grace, they are so perfectly enlightned and sanctified, that they receive all truth at first, and can never come to know more or better, then they did at first admission into that glorious place.

Fourthly, *There is no man living, though never so learned and so knowing, but may still understand more.* In him there may be, there will be *Yea* and *Nayes*: He will have cause to confesse he was in this error once, he misunderstood such and such Texts of Scripture formerly. Doth not experience confirm this? Hence are their retractations, their recognitions and reviews of their works, which they have put out with much judgement and deliberation. So that we are not to wonder, if the most excellent and learned men do sometimes say, *This I thought once, and this was my judgement once, but now I am better informed.* It is true, the case of the Apostles, and such as were divinely inspired of old, is different from the most eminent, holy and learned men that are in the Church; for though after their first call by Christ, they did retain some ignorance upon them, yea did erre in some doctrinal points of great consequence, yet after they received the holy Ghost, in a full confirmation of them in their Office, then they were made infallible; so that in their preaching and writing they could not erre: And therefore if there had been any *Yea and Nay*, any contrariety in their Doctrine. If any of them should have said, *Thus I thought once, but it was my error, I am now of another mind,* this would have made us questioned their immediate call from God; but all Pastors and Teachers that are to guide the Church, they are not to expect such infallibility, neither should people look for such assistance upon us; but we are limited to the Scripture, as the Rule by which all spirits are to be tried. If therefore any eminent Officer of the Church do build hay and stubble upon the foundation of precious stone and pearle, wonder not at it: Or if you see such afterwards more enlightned, and to bewaile the hay and stubble they have built. Let not this make you stagger; so as to think with your selves, what can we believe? For they may erre in one thing as well as another; and as they confesse they have taught false in one particular, so it may be in all the rest, and therefore we are not bound to believe them at all. For

4. No man but may know more than he doth.

In the fifth place, *You must distinguish between that which is fundamental in a word, and that which is circa, or supra fundamental.* The word of God containeth in it all things that are necessary to salvation, but withall it hath ma-

5. We must distinguish betwixt what is, and what is not fundamental.



ny excellent conclusions that are deduceable from them. It hath not onely the foundation stones, but an excellent and glorious superstructure: It hath not onely milk for the babe, but strong meat for the adult person. And although there be no truth revealed in the Scripture, which when sufficiently proposed to us, we ought to despise, it being the truth of the holy Ghost: and wilfully to oppose any known truth of Gods word, though it be farre from the fundamentals, is a very damnable sinne, and rebellion against the Spirit of God; yet for all that, we must alwayes distinguish between the *fundamentals* and *principles of Religion* (such as are named, *Heb. 6.*) and the *conclusions*, by many *mediums* deduced from them; between the seed and the crop; between the essentials and the accessories. For there is no godly man, much lesse no godly Officer, that is so farre left by God, as to erre in *fundamentals of salvation*, at least perpetually; and therefore they have no *Yea, and Nay* in them. For they have the promise of God, which is, *That the Spirit shall lead them into all truth*, John 16.13. And they have also the anointing, *which will teach them all things*, 1 John 2. 27. where *by all things*, is not meant, *Omne scibile*, *Every thing that may be known*; for then they should know all the arts, and all the tongues, every one would be wiser than *Solomon*. No nor *all things in Religion*, not *all things in faith and manners*, for that would contradict other places, which say, *We know but in part*, 1 Cor. 3. and also, *That we are to grow in knowledge*, 2 Pet. 3. 18. but *all things necessary to salvation*. They shall not want the knowledge of that thing, the absence whereof will damn them. It may be for a season, they may be involved in some fundamental error, even as they may in regard of their lives fall into some gross impieties, that do for the present take away the present claim that they have to the Kingdom of Heaven; but at last they shall be delivered, because it's not possible the elect should be *deceived*, viz. *totally and finally*, by the most deceiveable wayes of falshood that are, *Matth. 24. 24*. Now the knowledge of this is necessary to obviate that Objection, which you heard mentioned. If the Ministers of the Gospel may be *Yea and Nay* in *some things*, *why not in all things*? If they erre in *one thing*, *why not in every thing*? This is not to be yeelded unto. For they cannot erre in necessities, though they may in accessories; They cannot lay any other foundation than what is laid, yet they may build hay and stubble. Therefore it's senseless and irrational to argue from any error or mistake the Ministers may have in some points of Religion, that are problematical, to those that are essential. For in these later we are sure, we are never deceived, we may with *Paul* confidently say, *If an Angel from Heaven preach contrary to that Doctrine, let him be accursed*.





## SERM. CXVIII.

*A further Discovery of the sinfulness and reproach of Inconstancy, especially in a Minister.*

2 COR. I. 18.

*Our word toward you, was not yea and nay.*

**W**E are pursuing this truth, *That inconstancy and contrariety in the Doctrine of Ministers, is a very great reproach to them.* For the discovering whereof we have brought in some particulars, and proceed upon the same account. As

First, *We must alwayes distinguish between constancy and pertinacy; for these differ as much as light and darkness, though one may seem very like the other.* Insomuch that the rash, wilful pertinacy of some men in their wayes and opinions, though never so false, is gloried in by them, as true constancy. Never is sinne more ready to deceive us, then when it cometh in truths mantle, when the Devil appeareth like *Samuel*. For then this lustre and glistering doth deceive us, taking vice for vertue, that we cannot be brought into any way of amendment. But this we must resolve upon, That constancy and pertinacy, they differ as much as evil and good. To be a constant man is a duty; to be a pertinacious man is a sinne. If you see a Papist, or an Heretick, that will endure the greatest torment, ere he will be *Yea* and *Nay*, as often it falleth out: This man is not to be commended for constancy, but condemned for his wilfulness and pertinacy. So that among many other differences *constancy* and *pertinacy* are discriminated in their object; for *constancy* hath alwayes that which is good and true for its object, as the Apostle saith, *It is good to be zealously affected in a good thing*, Gal. 4. 18. so it is good to be *constant*, and persevering in that which is a duty. But then *pertinacy* is alwayes in that which is false and evil; and therefore is commonly made to be a necessary concomitant of an heretical person. Though he hold a grievous error, yet if he doth it not with *pertinacy* after frequent admonitions and convictions, he is not judged an Heretick; according to that known saying of *Austins*, *Errare possum, Hereticus esse nolo*. The Apostle also supposeth wilfulness and refractoriness in *Tir.* 3. 10. when he biddeth us, *Reject an heretick after the first and second admonition*, implying that thereby he hath fully discovered his *pertinacy*, and so his incorrigibility. If then in a sacred Oath, wherein we solemnly call upon God as a witness, when it is about a sinfull and ungodly thing, it is our duty to break it. It was *Herod's* sinne, that he would fulfill his oath; then how much more, if thou art in an erroneous, or in a sinfull and ungodly way to go on wilfully, and wilt not change thy mind whatsoever cometh of it? This pertinacy

1. We must distinguish between constancy and pertinacy.



is also seen in wicked men, who will not be reformed; though the Ministry be never so potent and effectual; though light penetrate never so secretly into their breasts, yet like *Balaam* they go on desperately against the Angel of God, with a sword in his hand, and glory that they are no changelings; whereas, if to be of another mind, were alwayes sinne, their repentance would be a vice, and not a virtue. For what is that, but to be of another mind, to change our minds? whether it be in doctrinal errors, or practical impieties, there must be a repentance, a changing of our minds, else we shall never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Remember then this difference, be a *constant man*, not a *pertinacious, self-willed man*. The former's *Yea, yea*; and *Nay, nay*, in a good sense; the later in a bad sense. *Solomon* saith, *Bray a fool in a mortar, yet his foolishnesse will not depart from him*, Prov. 27. 22. What is he therefore to be commended, because he will not be changed? *Yea*, this change from all evil of mind, or life, is so necessary, that God hath appointed his Ministry for this end. For this end he afflicteth and chastiseth, that we should be men of other minds, of other perswasions than we have been. *Arrianus's Epictetus* hath a Chapter (*Lib. 2. cap. 15.*) against such who will contumaciously persist in what they have decreed; and instanceth in a friend, who had decreed to famish and starve himself, and was hardly perswaded to the contrary, meerly because he would be as good as his purpose: whereas, first, we are to consider, whether the thing decreed be good and right or no. Mad men have strength, but they put it out in a furious way; so erroneous and wicked men, they will be the same, they will not alter or change; but this is in a sinfull and damnable way. Oh that we could see many putting a *Nay* upon their former *Yea*! To cry as he did, *Ego non sum ego*: for unlesse such do become changed, they are sure to perish.

2. Then is it a reproach to change, when we change from truth.

Secondly, *Then therefore is yea and nay so reproachfull, when they are mutable from truth as well as errour, as also from corrupt and light motives.* Some have an inconstancy and levity of mind, they do not adhere long to any one thing. These want solidity and weight, and therefore are like feathers and straws that are blown up and down with every wind of Doctrine. These are children wanting sound judgement, and so are easily deluded. Hence the Apostle exhorteth, *Ephes. 4. 14. That we be not as children tossed up and down with every wind of Doctrine.* How many are there that do not adhere to the truths of God upon constant divine motives, but light and corrupt, whereby it cometh to passe, that they have *Annuam & menstruam fidem*; They have a *daily, monethly and yearly faith*; and we may truly say of them, what *Maldonate* by scorn, deriding the division of faith, given by Protestants, *Illis enim tot sunt fides, quot sunt in lyrâ.* It is this unsetledness and inconstancy, that maketh the Protestant Religion so reproached by Papists; herein they boast; by this they insinuate, that you Protestants go from Religion to Religion, from opinion to opinion, and have no *huc usque*, but change their perswasions, as often as their fashions. Now it must be granted, that such giddinesse and inconstancy, doth not consist with a sound faith and judgement. Men may be very learned men, and yet very unsetled in their judgement. Who will not acknowledge that *Grotius* was to be honoured for his learning? But his inconstancy was the dead flie in his box of ointment. Hence *Rivet* relateth of him, That when he was in prison, some interceded with Prince *Maurice* for his liberty; but the Prince denied, and pointing to the weather-cock upon his house, said, *En caput Grotii.* On the other side, it was the commendation of *John Baptist*, that he was not as a *reed shaken with every wind*. When we have once tried all things, and found out the truth, then we are to hold it fast; we are not to be alwayes enquiring and seeking; this is perpetually to erre in the wilderness, and never come into *Canaan*. Pray therefore to God against inconstancy and unsetlednesse in mind



mind in matters of Religion, such a temptation hath fallen so foully upon some, that it hath even brought a distraction upon them. It is a mercy to be settled upon the Rock, to be founded upon the truth, and then to be immovable; whereas the doubting and divided mind, is never satisfied, and flieth from one thing to another, never having any rest. If then thy faith be true, believe as thou hast done; if thy worship of God be according to his will, continue to do as thou hast done; and so if thy life be according to Gods command, never change it, thou canst not do better; onely be sure thy foundation be truly laid, and then abhorre all temptations and opinions that would bring thee to doubting; for here will be no end, thou wilt be in daily restless thoughts of soul. Hence the Apostle James saith, *A double-minded man is unstable in all his wayes*, Jam. 1. 6, 7. He is like a *wave tossed up and down in the Sea*. Oh how unfit and unable are such to confesse the truth before a crooked generation, to give witness to it by the losse of the dearest comforts they doe enjoy, when they do not know whether it be Gods truth, or mans error that they plead for?

Now you may ask, *What are the causes procreant of such lightnesse and inconstancy?*

The causes of inconstancy.

The first is *Ignorance*, when we are not able of our selves to judge what is the truth of God, but receive it wholly from trust by tradition. This traditional Religion, receiving things meerly from men, and because of their authority, must needs make men change, as that changeth. *Solomon* hath a full expression to this, *The fool believeth every word, but the prudent man looketh well to his going*, Prov. 14. 15. The more ignorant then a Ministry is, the more credulous it is; and so is like the *materia prima*, ready to receive different formes and shapes; when a mans faith is wholly borrowed, and he liveth by another mans faith, not his own; when he shutteth his own eyes, and will onely see by another mans, then he must call black, white; and white, black, as often as those will have him do so, upon whom he doth depend. If then it be a shame for a private Christian not to live by his own faith, and to resolve all into an implicit belief of others; Is it not much more an hainous sinne in Ministers, who are to be guides, and to lead others?

1. Ignorance.

Secondly, *An affectation of singularity and vain-glory in a Minister*, may make him to be *Yea and Nay*. He seeth that by holding and preaching the old known way, he shall not be much admired; and therefore as people runne in multitudes to new sights, so they do to such who bring unheard of opinions. This hath been one of the chiefest causes of all the heresies and errors that ever have been in the Church; they have been weary of the accustomed Manna; they have like the *Athenians* been alwayes enquiring into what new thing is brought forth. And hereupon, as pride in apparel doth alwayes bring forth new fashions; so pride in Religion, new opinions. And hence it is, that men affect new words, new phrases, new expressions, yea and new Doctrines; all which causeth a mutability and change. Now surely, if a man ever did find the lively power of the truths of God, he once professed, upon his own heart; when he should at any time be invited to taste of *new wine*, he would say, *the old is better*. When *Peter* knew, that with Christ alone was eternal life, then he saith, *Whither shall we goe?* John 6. 68. *Or to whom shall we goe?* We cannot be better than we are. Now the other Disciples had not fully tasted of the good Word of God; they depart from Christ, and never follow him more. We may say then to all those unstable soules, who wander from one opinion to another, and so from truth to falsehoods many time; Why doe ye leave the Fountain to go to the Cisterns? Why doe ye leave the fatnesse of the Olive, and the sweetnesse of the Vine, to go to the Briar?

2. Affectation of singularity and vain-glory

B b b b

Thirdly,



Thirdly, Another cause of changeablenesse, is, *Love to profit, to earthly greatnesse, and worldly advantages.* There is none addicted to this, but he must be *Yea and Nay*, often and often again. Must not the shadow alter often, sometimes longer, sometimes shorter, sometimes streight, and sometimes bowed down, because it wholly followeth the body, and hath its dependence thereon? So it is here, when men regard Religion only for politick and self-seeking ends, then they must be hot and cold, they must be bitter and sweet, as their interest requireth. This hath alwayes made *Ecebolius's* in the Church; onely it were well, if at last they would bewail this carnality, this inconstancy; as *Ecebolius* did, throwing himself down before the Church gathered together, crying out, *Calcate me insipidum salem.* This made one Bishop be surnamed *Enripus*, for his frequent compliances and accommodations of himself, that thereby he might be advanced.

4. Examples.

Lately, Another cause, though external, is, *The example of others.* When an whole Church, or an whole Nation, becometh *Yea and Nay*, then it is very difficult to be immoveable. To be onely *Athanasius*, when the whole world is *Arrian*, that is difficult. We are apt to think that multitude is patronage enough for any inconstancy. Though we judge the usages in Religion superstitious, yet we are ready to say, as he did, *Eamus ad communem errorem.* Hence it is that we read some Nations have received the Popish Religion, and then after that Protestantisme, and so change them mutually again. Now unlesse a man be bottomed upon divine Motives, he cannot be *Lot* in a *Sodom*; he cannot be like that River that emptieth it self into the brackish Sea, and yet keeps its own sweetnesse. Not to turn when all turn, argueth there must be some strong principle within, some life within, else the dead fish would be carried away with the stream.

We must distinguish between essential and circumstantial in Religion.

The conclusive particular to clear this whole Discourse, and which will antidote against the Objection at first mentioned, is this; We must distinguish between the *Essentials of Religion*, and *External formes thereof, which are mutable and changeable.* It may be the same *Essential Religion* still, though the form of administrations may alter; even as it is the same man still, though he wear change of garments. This is on purpose mentioned to discover the ignorance of those, who charge levity and inconstancy upon the Ministers of the Gospel, because they use not the same publick Liturgy, nor administer Sacraments in the same order and forme, as was formerly. Yea some are so farre scandalized, as to think this is the removing of the Protestant Religion; but all this is built upon a false foundation, as if Protestant Religion were built upon Church-formes of administration. For if that were so, then there would be many Protestant Religions, because several Protestant Churches have alwayes had several formes of administration; some more pure than other, though all retaining the essentials of Religion. Religion then is the same still, and the Ministers of the Gospel are the same still; we have also the same way still to Heaven, and the same Christ our Mediatour, though the forme of Church-administrations be altered; we have publick prayer still, and the same Scripture-matter that is to be put in prayer, only the form is altered; and so about the Sacraments onely the order may be altered. If therefore this offend thee, and cause thee to think that Ministers are light and inconstant, it is thy own ignorance; as if wine were altered, because emptied into divers cups. Yea it cannot appear out of good antiquity for many years, that ever the primitive Christians meeting together in a Church-way, for the solempne administration of Christs Ordinances, ever had any publick Liturgy, or set forme. For as for those Liturgies that are fastened upon some of the Apostles, they are justly censured as supposititious. Let this  
the



then stop the mouth of such cavillers, as aske, Why is not the Crosse and other Ceremonies still used? Why not the same form of Prayer? For hereby the true Religion is not altered at all. Now the reason why such *inconstancy* must needs be a reproach to Ministers, is because hereby it is plainly discovered, that they are not guided by the Spirit of God after his Word; for the Word is the same, and the Spirit of God is alwayes like it self. When therefore men preach contrary Doctrines, we may certainly conclude, these are not in both guided by the Spirit of God, but that they are carried away according to the imaginations of their owne heart. When therefore men do not appeare as coming from God, nor as having Commission from him, all that they say is easily rejected: They see no more than of a mutable changeable man in them. *Paul* doth so often commend his Office with this character, that it is of God, and not of man; whereas if thy administration be of man, and not of God, it will not bring honour or majesty with it.

Secondly, *It is not onely thus a reproach, but also it rendereth a man uselesse, it hindereth that other good and truth, which may be in him.* Some report of *Luther*, that he was convinced about his errour of *Consubstantiation*, but yet thought it not wisdom to publish his recantation, lest all his other Doctrine should be likewise called into question. Certainly that was more carnal policy, than Scripture-wisdom, if it be a true report. However there is thus much truth may be deduced from it, That inconstancy in some truths, though of never so small concernment, is enough to bring all under examination. Yet the people of God they are alwayes to remember this Caution, that they labour for the full assurance of Gods truth so upon their own hearts, that though they see many Ministers alter and change, that they may remain immoveable. It hath been a saying, *Optima fides laicorum*. And we reade of a Martyr, though a woman, who being converted from Popery by a Minister, but revolting and denying the truth afterwards; when this example was brought to her, to make her change also, she replied; no, for now she believed the truth, not because that Minister said it, but because Gods Word did confirme it.





## SERM. CXIX.

*Christ the Alpha and Omega of all Preaching.*

2 COR. I. 19.

*For the Sonne of God Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me, and Sylvanus, and Timotheus, was not Yea, and Nay, but in him was Yea.*

**T**His verse containeth a new Argument for the constancy and immutability of *Paul's* Doctrine, and it is from the object matter of his preaching. If Christ be alwayes the same Christ; if there be no new Christ, then his preaching must alwayes be the same, because he preached nothing but Christ.

So that in the words we have,

1. The *Object matter* of *Paul's* preaching, what were the contents of his Sermon, not his own imaginations, not the *Jewish* Rites and Ceremonies, but Christ: and he is described,

1. From his two Natures, his Divine, *The Sonne of God*; His humane *Jesus*, which name was given him by the *Angel*.

2. From his Office, *Christ*. The two Natures are united, but distinguished; there is *alind & alind*; there is not a confusion of them. Again, they are united into one person, so that there is not *alius & alius*.

In the next place you have,

1. The Instruments that do thus preach Christ, whereof *Paul* is set down as the principal, *by me*:

2. His associates and fellow-labourers, *Sylvanus* and *Timotheus*.

Lastly, Here is the *Predicate*, or *Property* affirmed of this object matter thus preached, was not *Yea and Nay*, but in him was *yea*.

In all these parts we may find excellent substantial matter; but I shall be the briefer in some of the Doctrines, because I have handled them upon other occasions.

Let us beginne with the *Object Matter*, the *Sonne of God Jesus Christ*, was preached. By *Christ*, some here understand the Doctrine of Christ, and give a Canon or Rule for interpreting *Paul*, that sometimes by Christ we must understand his Doctrine: so *Ephes. 4. But ye have not so learned Christ*. In like manner some expound that place, *Hebr. 13. 8.* which is parallel to the Text, *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever*, that is, the Doctrine of Christ. We may understand both, Christ and the Doctrine of Christ: the one is preached, *ut quod*; the other, *ut quo* (as they say.) Indeed some Expositors doe not make this an Argument from the Object Matter, but *à pari*, or *majori*; if Christ Jesus was not unfaithfull, was not uncertain and inconstant; but whatsoever he promised, he made good; then neither are we his Ministers, who are depu-  
ted



ted to this Office by him. But I rather go the former way proposed, and then the first Doctrine is,

*That Christ only is to be the subject of all our preaching.*

Christ only is to be the subject of our preaching.

The Apostle argueth his Doctrine was alwayes the same, and uniforme; because Christ is so, he never altered and changed; now he preached onely *Christ*. As therefore the subject of the whole Scripture is *Christ*: The whole Word of God tends to the exalting of *Christ*: So it ought to be with us the Ministers of the Word. As Christ is in himself the *Alpha* and *Omega*; so he should be in our whole Ministry: him whom God intended to exalt, we should also magnifie. And to let you know, that you doe not understand any thing rightly, till it bring you to Christ, there is no truth, that you are simply to stay in; but you are to follow this streame, till it empty it selfe into the Ocean, which is Christ. When we preach of Faith, of Repentance, of a godly life, these are but the ladders (as it were) to tread upon, that you may lay hold on Christ.

To enlarge this truth, we must take notice *how*, or *when Christ is preached*. And

When is Christ preached.

First, *When we declare that Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified at Jerusalem is the promised Messiah, that he is the Person, in whom all those glorious Prophecies that are mentioned in the Prophets, are exactly fulfilled.* This is indeed the Fundamental Article, upon which all the other Doctrines about Christ do depend. For if that individual person be not the *Messias*, then doe we in vaine preach him to be the Mediatour, and the Saviour. Now this preaching of Christ is the more necessary, because of the *Jewes*, that are desperate enemies to our Christianity, expecting another *Messias*, judging our Christ to be an Impostor, and that he deservedly died, upon the Law made against false Prophets and blasphemers. So that this was a great part of *Paul's* preaching, to prove, that *Jesus* was the *Christ* promised for the *Jewes*, being pre-possessed with false principles about a *Messias*, expecting he should come like a temporall Prince, to worke externall deliverance for them, the more difficult was it to perswade them of this truth. And for this ground it is, that we have the Scripture attributing so much to the believing of this truth; *He that believeth Jesus is the Christ, is born of God, 1 Joh. 5.1. & 4.15. Whosoever confesseth that Jesus is the Sonne of God, dwelleth in him, and he in God.* Hence also it is, that our Saviour enquired about this faith so much, when any came to him, *If they did believe he was the Sonne of God; If they did believe he was able to doe what they desired.* The Papists indeed would from hence inferre, That there is no such thing required in Scripture, as by a *special Faith* to appropriate Christ to our selves, to be mine and thy Saviour; because this general faith will suffice (say they) and Christ required no more than to acknowledge he was the Saviour sent of God into the world to heale sinners; but this doth not exclude *justifying, special faith*. Onely the great reason, why they were required to make a confession of that dogmatical truth, *viz. that he was the Messias*, was, because that was the thing so greatly controverted at that time; if that were believed, all the rest would be quickly assented unto. So that this is the introductory worke, with this we are to beginne, *That the Jesus crucified at Jerusalem is the Messias promised*; and that it is in vain to look for any other, seeing that all the characters of a *Messias*, given by the Prophets, doe so exactly and punctually meet in him. And as for

1. When he is declared to be the Messiah.



for that great Objection, that the *Jewes* have, The temporal glorious things attributed to the *Messias*, were not accomplished in Christ. The weight of which seemeth to be heavy, that some expect a second coming of Christ, when he will personally reigne in a glorious manner upon the earth, and then those promises will be fulfilled. But the most proper and solid Answer is, That as the Old Testament doth describe Gospel-worship under the Names and Titles of the Levitical service; so it doth also declare spiritual and Gospel-priviledges, under the names of earthly greatness. Neither is this any wonder, seeing even the New Testament describeth the joy and glory of Heaven, by that which is glorious and pleasing to our senses.

2. When preached as God-man.

Secondly, *Christ is to be preached as God and man, for so both his Natures are here mentioned.* Wonderfull hath been the violence of the Devil, in raising up curied Hereticks, who have with all their might endeavoured to disrobe him of either of his Natures. Some, and they quickly filled the whole world, denied the Divine Nature of Christ; others, though not so numerous, they denied his Humane Nature. Which opinions, though so abominable, and very destructive of the Fundamentals, yet found many gates and doores set open for their entertainment. But if he be not preached as *God-man*, as *Emanuel*, as the *Word made flesh*, then also our faith and consolation is wholly destroyed. In the union of these two Natures is founded that aptnesse and fitness which is in him to be our Mediatour: No meer creature could be a Mediatour, no not the highest and sublimest Angel. He must be man, because man had sinned, because the curse of death must be removed by death. And he must be God also, else he could not satisfie Justice, nor remove the curse of the Law. It is true, God and man united together in one Person, is a wonder of wonders, there is not the like, nor an example thereof in all the world. Divines doe bring many instances to illustrate it, but none are perfect: And indeed if there were the like, then it would not be singular. Now though Christ be thus often preached amongst us, How great is the ignorance of many people in this particular? Aske them, *What was Christ?* They will say, a *Saviour*, or some such thing; but to give any understanding account about his God-head and Man-hood, therein they faile exceedingly. How canst thou be saved that knowest not what Christ was? Though it hath been a thousand times preached in thy eares, That Christ is God from all eternity, and that in time he became man, to die for our sinnes, yet thou remainest as ignorant, as if thou hadst lived amongst *Pagans*, where the Name of Christ is not heard. But let the true believer be daily exercising himself upon this mystery of Godlinesse, which the Apostle in a most compendious manner doth describe, *1 Timothy 3. 16. God was manifest in the flesh, &c.* Neither is this speculatively to be believed, but it is to advance godlinesse; and therefore called the *mystery of godlinesse*. For what holinesse, what love, what thankfulnesse, what reformation should this make, in that God is made man?

*Cur Deus fit homo, si non corrigitur homo?*

Therefore the *Socinian*, that denieth the God-head of Christ, taketh away that great incentive to godlinesse, which the Scripture urgeth from Gods manifestation in the flesh.

3. When preached in his person and his offices.

Thirdly, *Christ is to be preached in his Person and Offices, as well as his Nature.* That he is one Person, not two Persons, though he hath two Natures: And herein also faith doth transcend reason; here is a particular above the reach of the most intellectual capacity: How there can be

an



an individual, humane Nature, and yet not have a personal subsistency compleat of it self, which yet it hath not in Christ; for then Christ would be two Persons, one as God, and another as man, which is absurd to think. It is well called *Christian Faith*, because in this the understanding of a man must only acquiesce upon the testimony of the Scripture. Therefore when the Scripture saith, *Christ was made like us in all things, sinne only excepted*; we may also adde the manner of his humane subsistency, which is not as in other men; but his Office that is to be celebrated with great joy. How were the Angels affected with this, though they did not immediately reape the benefit by his death? Now this Office of Christ is made by Divines three-fold, a *Priest*, a *Prophet*, and a *King*; the summe of it consisteth in being a Saviour and a Redeemer from all our sins, both in respect of the guilt of them, as also the power of them. It is woe with the Church, when Christ is not thus preached the alone Saviour, the alone Mediatour. Now how abominably derogatory the Popish preaching in many ages hath been to Christ herein, the world knoweth: Infomuch that *St Francis*, or *St Dominick*, or the *Virgin Mary*, or some other Saint, these were preached more than Christ. Infomuch that we may say, Till God raised up our Reformers, there was no preaching of Christ: Images, Saints, Pilgrimages, and workes of Supererogations, these were made the whole of Christianity. It is true, they would sometimes mention Christ, but then they make him but a *semi-Saviour*; they make others to joyne in this worke. And although they runne to many plausible distinctions; yea would perswade us, that they more honour Christ, then we doe; yet all the water of their *Tyber*, cannot cleanse them herein. It was then blessed mercy, when the Sunne-shine of the Gospel began to arise; so that Christ was exalted in his Glory and his Offices; that now there was no more robbery, making others equal to him. Yea the bold blaspheming picture, was not ashamed of this Inscription, *That the way to Heaven by St Francis, was easier than by Christ*. The Papists then do not preach Christ. And as for the *Socinian*, he surpasseth the Papist, and deserveth not to be reckoned amongst Christians. For although they hold him to be a constituted God; and some of them say, *That religious adoration is due to him*: yet they say, *This is meerly from Gods appointment*. Hence as they disrobe him of his Deity, so they deny him to be a Saviour and Redeemer, by way of satisfaction and atonement to the justice of God, and therefore make him but as an eminent Prophet and Martyr, but having no essential God-head, nor procuring by his death any atonement for our sinnes to the vindicative justice of God. What cause then have we to rejoyce under the full and exact preaching of *Christ*, where *Christ* in his Natures, in his Offices is so magnified, that he alone is to be our Mediatour? In his obedience alone, in his death alone we put all our confidence. For if *Christ* be not known as the way, truth and life: If the *Natures and Offices of Christ* be not understood, all the way of consolation, of justification, of remission of sinne, is wholly mistaken. Because Christ is not known in his Mediatory Office, therefore men either runne into despair and tormenting fears on one side, or else into instituted wayes of superstition and supererogation; to the workes of the Law; and to merits, which hath been the poisonous Doctrine in Gods Church for many yeares together, this was the wormwood that was in all their water. The *Popish Casuists* did give consciences troubled for sinne, nothing but gall to drink; and instead of healing did provoke and irritate the wound farre more.

Fifthly, *Christ is preached, when he is set up as the King and Lord of his Church, to whose Lawes and commands we are wholly to submit; else we*

5. When he is set up as the head of his Church.

shall



shall hereafter finde him to be the great Judge of the world, who will judge it in righteousness. People are deceived, when they think Christ must be preached onely as a meer absolute Saviour, that though they live in prophanenesse and dissolutenesse, yet they are to trust in him as a Saviour. Whosoever preacheth Christ thus, he preacheth another Christ than what is revealed in the Word. Therefore the Doctrines of *Antinomians* and *Liber-tines*, who turne the grace of God into wantonnesse, are to be abhorred with all abomination; though there may be a sinfull setting up of righteousness, and our good workes against Christ and his grace; so there may be also a licentious conjoyning Christ and wickednesse. We must therefore distinguish of what persons we have to do with. For, as *Luther* observed well to this effect, (*Comment. in Gen.*) *The Antinomians, who cry down holinesse and mortification, they maintain themselves by my words and doctrine which I have preached; but they must remember, that when we came out of Popery, we found the whole world in pharisaical admiration of superstitious workes, as if by them they should be justified and saved, which made us so advance Christ. But under this pretence to cry down the preaching of the Law, to give way to all licentiousnesse; as if a Publican living in his sinnes might be saved by Christ, though not a Pharisee: This is to separate one Scripture from another.*

But you will say, *If we are onely to preach Christ, then we must not preach the Law, we must not preach about regeneration, and the differencing characters between a temporary believer, and a true one: we must not then preach repentance, holy duties, nor the day of Judgement.*

To this it is answered, *That the right preaching of all these, is to preach Christ.* Therefore the Law is preached, hell and damnation are preached, that so Christ may be the more welcome, that so the grace of the Gospel may be the more conspicuous. Even as it is with the Physician, it's health that he aimeth at, even while he maketh sick, while he putteth to paine, and seemeth to take the ready way to destroy and kill. The Husbandman, while he ploweth and harroweth the ground, it is the crop he looketh at in all this: so it is with the Ministers of God, while they convince, threaten, terrifie; while they informe, direct; all is to bring you nearer to Christ; These are the Ladders to stand upon, while Christ is built in you.



## SERM. CXX.

## Our Lord Christ is the Son of GOD.

2 COR. I. 19.

*For the Sonne of God, Jesus Christ, &c.*

**V**VE heard what was the Subject matter of *Pauls* Preaching, even the *Lord Christ*, who is described from his Natures, and Office. The first is, *His Divine Nature*, in the former words, *The Son of God*. What is necessary for the Explication of this, shall be brought in the Amplification of the Doctrine; which is,

That *The Lord Christ is the Son of God*.

This is the greatest and most glorious Attribute that can be given to him. It is for this that all adoration and divine worship is due to him. It is for this that we are commanded to put our trust and confidence in him. Had he not been truly God, he could not have been our Mediator, nor purchased our Salvation for us. No meer, pure creature, Man or Angel, could accomplish this work, but he that is our Saviour must be *Immanuel, God with us*. I shall not enlarge my self, concerning the dignity of this Subject, but briefly dispatch all I shall say at this time. And,

First, When we say, *He is the Son of God*; the meaning is, so that he is truly and properly of the same Nature with God. It is not to be understood diminutively, as if he were not the most High God, and *Jehovah*; but distinctively, in respect of the Father, he is the *Son of the Father*; so that, he hath the true nature with God, though not the same personal propriety with the Father. As then he is called the *Son of man*, because he hath the same nature of a man, so also the *Son of God*, because he hath the true nature of God; and therefore, *Rom. 9.* called God, blessed for evermore. And indeed, he that hath the Titles of *Jehovah*, the Properties of *Jehovah*, that doth those works only which *Jehovah* can do, he must needs be so the *Son of God*; that also he is God himself. And had not Christ been truly God, it behoved him to have denied it, when it was attributed to him. But, *Phil. 2.* He thought it no robbery to be equal with God. Such was Christs Humility, such was his love to his Fathers glory; such was his care to instruct his Disciples in that which was necessary to Salvation, that above all things he would have forewarned them, not to have taken him for the true High God, if he had not been so. How solicitous was *John Baptist*, that he might not be thought the *Christ*? How passionately affected were *Paul* and *Barnabas*; when the Heathens called them Gods, and would have attributed divine worship to him? Would not Christ have much more disclaimed these things, had it not been his due belonging to him? That he should be acknowledged the true God, equal with the Father. For, though indeed, at sometimes he saith, *The Father is greater than I*, and he maketh himself as sent from God, to do his will; yet, then he speaks that in respect of his Office, as Mediator; and so he is the Servant of God, appointed to do his will, in reference to the Salvation of Mankind.

The Lord Christ is the son of God.

1. He is truly God.

Cccc

2. Hence



2. He is not the son of God as others are called his sonnes: as

1. By Creation.

2. By Regeneration.

3. Because of their dignity.

3. He is therefore called the Son of God, because begotten from eternity of the Father.

4. He was begotten of the Father.

2. Hence, he is not the son of God in those Respects, which others are called so in the Scripture: as First, Some are called *The sons of God* in respect of creation: because they had their being immediately from God. Thus Adam is called the *Son of God*. 2. Some are called the sons of God, because of Regeneration, and Adoption, as all the godly are: neither is thus Christ called the son of God. Lastly, some are called the sons of God, because of their excellent Dignity and Priviledg; in which sense the Angels are called the sons of God. But Christ is called in such a sense the *Son of God*, that it cannot be attributed to any but him; and therefore, sometimes is called the *Only son of God*; some times the *Only begotten son of God*. And therefore none else may be called the *Son of God* in that respect he is.

3. He is therefore called the son of God, because begotten from Eternity of the Father. He is not called a Son in a metaphorical, but proper sense, and that by Generation; *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, *Psal. 27.* which, though applied in the New Testament, *Act. 13. 33.* to Christs Resurrection, when God raised him from the Grave, yet that is to be understood in respect of Manifestation and Declaration only: then he was powerfully manifested to be indeed the *only begotten Son of God*. That this begetting of him was from Eternity appeareth, *Mich. 5. 2.* *Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.* He is not then called the *Son of God* in the several senses the Socinians Assigne; as, because inaugurated to be a Prophet of his Church, nor because of that miraculous Conception and Nativity: nor, because, upon his Resurrection he was invested with Lordly Dignity and Dominion, but because he was from all Eternity begotten of the Father. As for that Passage in *Luke 1. 3.* where the Angel speaking of the overshadowing by the Holy Ghost, addeth, *Therefore also, that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God*: which hath prevailed with some, though Orthodox, so far, as to make that miraculous birth a ground of his Sonship to God. The best answer is, That it is an Argument from the signe, not from the cause; because he had such a miraculous conception, this did declare, that he was the *Son of God*. This must needs be so, because he was called the *Son of Man* from that birth: now he could not be called the son of man, and the *Son of God*, from the same fundamental respect. It is necessary then to inform your selves in this fundamental Article, that Christ is the *Son of God*; and in what sense he is so. For the Socinians acknowledg him a God, but an appointed one; a made and constituted one. Therefore Smalcus the Socinian inscribeth his Book, *de Divinitate Jesu Christi*, not *Deitate*; he confesseth the Divinity of Christ, but not the Deity. Now they were called *Divi* amongst the Heathens, who were made Gods after their death.

4. When he is called the Son of God, and that properly, this doth necessarily imply, that he was begotten of the Father. And in this Consideration the humane thoughts of men would be much scandalized, if they did not submit to Scripture. How many Hereticks blasphemously have derided at this, because we say, *God had a Son*, and that he is begotten of the Father? But we must know, there is a threefold Generation. First, *Physical*, of man begetting a man, and this is accomplished with manifold Imperfections. 2. *Metaphorical*, in which sense Philosophers do often speak of the *Conceptus mentis*, that the minde doth *designere verbum*; which instance some learned Divines delight to use in the Illustration of this Mystrious point. 3. There is an *hyperphysical* or supernatural Generation, above the way and course of nature; and in this sense the father is said to beget the son: so that, we are to remove all those Imperfections, which adhere to humane Generation, especially that of Separation and Multiplication. For amongst men, when the Father begets the Son, there is a multiplication of a new Essence; and then a Division or Separation of the Sons Essence from the Father;



Father; so that, although the Son hath the same specifical Essence with the Father, yet not the same numerical Essence: whereas in this supernatural Mystery, there is no division, or distinction of the Essence, but of the Person.

5. *Because these Mysteries seem very difficult to flesh and blood, therefore under all temptations we must adhere immoveably to the Word of God, believing the testimony thereof, and not attend to what humane Arguments suggest.* Thou must no more regard the Socinian Cavils, than *Hezekiah* was to do the railing Language of *Rabshaketh*; and we are the more solemnly ingaged hereunto, by our Baptisme; for that is a Dedication of us to the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Though there is a Distinction in Order; first the Father, then the Son; yet none in Dignity, and therefore, its the name, not the names. That place also of *John*, howsoever Socinians would wrest it, stands like Mount *Zion*, yea firmer than that, *1 John 5.7. There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.* When a man taketh off his heart from the Scripture, and beginneth to think, How can the Infinite Majesty of God have a Son, how can he have the same Essence, and yet be a distinct Person, whether did he beget this Son naturally or freely, whether from Eternity or in time; and if he might beget one Son, why not more? while (I say) thy Imperfect low Soul is arguing after this matter, fly from these temptations of Reason, as *Joseph* from his Mistress; captivate thy understanding to Scripture-testimony, hide thy head in this cloud, as it were, and put off thy discussion of it, till thou come to that perfect Academy in heaven, where we shall no longer know in part, but compleatly and perfectly. Hence those Hereticks, who deny Christs his Godhead, that they may the more securely indulge themselves in these Blasphemous Doctrines, make Reason the Judge of all Controversies in Faith, The Scripture must be submitted to reason, not Reason to Scripture. This Reason is made the standard to weigh all things by. But *Bernard* said well, *quid tum contra rationem, &c. What is so much against Reason, as to think to comprehend by reason the things above reason?* Such *Pigmeis* cannot measure the *Pyramides*. Yet this is not spoken as it that it were against true and solid Reason, that the Infinite God should have a Son: it is one thing, to be above Reason, another thing to be contrary to it. Now the cause of all that unhappy miscarriage in this matter is, because we are apt to judge of God, according to our thoughts of a man. When we hear of the Father, and his only begotten Son, we are apt to think it must be so in the Divine nature, as it is with the humane: we apprehend all alike. But thou must know, as the nature of God is incomprehensible, so is this begetting of his Son. Thou that art not able to comprehend the nature of God, how canst thou reach to the manner of the Begetting of his Son? Let us therefore satisfy our souls with the belief that it is so, not daring curiously to search into the manner how, lest like moaths flying about this light, we be at last consumed by it.

6. *That we may the more firmly believe this truth of Christs being the Son of God, we are to remember, that the Scripture maketh this Antichristianism; So that, he is an Antichrist, that denyeth the Son to be God, 1 John 2.22, 23. He is Antichrist that shall deny the father, and the son. Whosoever denyeth the Son, the same hath not the father.* Here we see, that these are inseparable, the Son and the Father; he that denie h the one, must necessarily deny the other; for they are essential Relatives, depending upon one another. The *Jews*, the *Turks*, they hold one God; but because they deny Christ to be the Son of God; they deny the Father. It is not enough to acknowledg one true God; but we must also acknowledg him to be the the Father of Christ, and Christ to be his Son: without this there is no Eternal life to be had, as *1 John 5.20. We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ; This is the true God, this is Eternal life.* The Socinians also differ but gradually in their impiety from the *Turks*, and

5. In these Mysteries we must adhere wholly to the testimony of the word.

6. He is Antichrist that denies the Son to be God.



therefore, no wonder if some of them have fallen into *Mahumetisme*; for they make Christ to be a meer man, though a constituted Lord and God; and therefore they deny the Father and the Son: and although they pretend it is their conscience, that out of reverence and regard to the honor of God the Father, they dare not affirm the Son to be equal God with him, yet it is plain, that there is no jealousy between Father and Son in point of honor; but the Father commands us to honour the Son, and the Son also to honour the Father. For, how clear is that? *John 5.23. That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father.* And therefore all those Blasphemous Doctrines, which tend to the Dishonour of Christ, as the Son of God, do also tend to the dishonour of God the Father. So that, it is no wonder if he be made an Antichrist, that doth so. For there is a *political Antichrist*, who opposeth Christ in his Offices, and while pretending to Christ, doth oppose Christ: such is the Pope of *Rome*: and a *Doctrinal Antichrist*: and they are those who deny Christ, either to be God or man. When therefore you hear, how much this pestilential Doctrine of *Socinianism* prevaleth, that men dare boldly plead against the Godhead of Christ, tremble at it, humble thy self under the want of love to the truths of God; take heed of pride, self-conceit, contempt of the faithfull Guides God hath set over thee; for those sinnes do hurry men headlong into everlasting Perdition: those spiritual Judgments of God upon mens parts, and intellectual abilities are the most dreadfull of all.

7. The spirit of giddiness hath justly fallen upon these that deny Christ to be God.

7. *The spirit of giddiness and contradiction is justly fallen upon those, who have denied this essential Deity of Christ*; insomuch that one party will not acknowledg the other Christian. For some of them hold, that because Christ is not truly God, therefore he is not to be praid unto; neither doth Religious Adoration belong to him. The other, they affirm, because he is an *appointed Lord* over the whole world; and so, though not a God by nature, yet by Office: and seing that the Father hath given him the Dominion of the world; therefore Prayer, and all Divine Worship is to be attributed unto him. *Volkelius* the *Socinian* handling this Question, *de verâ Relig.* lib. 4. c. 11. Whether it be lawfull to pray to Christ, declareth his minde, in two Assertions. 1. *That we may lawfully pray unto Christ alwayes.* And 2. *That we are not alwayes bound to it*: yet addeth, that *we might deservedly be thought not worthy of the Christian Name, if we should refuse to call upon him.* But all this is meer impiety; for it is impossible to call upon God the Father, and not also to call upon Christ: and when one Person is prayed unto, the other is not neglected, but included. And therefore, how those *Socinians* by their Principles can maintain the Religious Adoration of Christ, against *Franciscus David*, let them look to it.

Let us proceed to make Use of this. Is Christ the Son of God? Then with the Scripture let us admire that Love and condescension of the Father, who sent his only Son to become a most ignominious and accursed man for our sakes. The Mystery of the Doctrine, and the Mystery of his love are both incomprehensible: the one is above our understanding, the other above our affections. What may not God expect from us, who hath done so much to us? God made man, God made weak, miserable, and crucified man, to redeem us from our sinnes. What strong Obligations doth this lay upon us, to make us for ever to abhor all sin? All the Arguments of moral Philosophers against sin, are but like a wooden dagger to this *Goliaths* Sword. Here is fire enough to melt the toughest iron. Was God made man to remove sin, and shall thou yield thy self up to it? What remedy will prevail if this do not?



## S E R M. CXXI.

*Christ is Jesus, a Saviour to his people.*

2 COR. I. 19.

*For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, &c.*

**W**E have in a brief manner declared the former description of *Christ*, in respect of his *divine nature*, *The Son of God*; whose Deity, so much oppugned by blasphemous Heretiques, is yet the Foundation of our Christianity. Therefore, those *Socinians*, who would reckon the manner how he is God, among the Accessories, and not Fundamentals in Religion, are justly to be exploded. *If we believe he is God (say they) it is enough to salvation: but, whether he be an essential God, or made and constituted one, that is not necessary.* Even as (they instance prophaneely concerning *Alexander*) to some he was accounted a God, to others a man: but because both these, though different in their Opinions, did reverence and obey him, as a King, that was enough. But, oh prophane mouth! The Lord rebuke such spirits, and let not the Godly so much as bid *God speed*, or receive into their houses such as bring this blasphemous Doctrine. But let us proceed to the other descriptions of *Christ*, which are partly in respect of his *Humane Nature*, *Jesus*; and partly, in respect of his Office, *Christ*. We have already said enough from the first Verse, to clear the Grammatical Interpretation of these words; as also, what the judgments of Learned men are about those two Names: So that I may not *actum agere*, I shall insist upon New matter, not then delivered, and first we Observe.

*That the Lord Christ is a Jesus, and a Saviour to his people.*

This Name containeth the glad Tydings of the Gospel. If so be the news of a Physician, that can cure all Diseases be so welcome to diseased Persons: if the year of *Jubilee* was so acceptable to all those whose Lands were mortgaged amongst the *Jews*, and they perplexed in extream Debts: how precious and dear should the name of a Saviour be to poor undone sinners, who while they look upon themselves only, and their own power, see no way to escape Eternal wrath? Did the Angels so much rejoyce, when this *Jesus* came into the World, who were not concerned so much in his Redemption? and shall distressed and sinfull man not have his heart leap within him, for joy hereat? That we may be affected herein, let us consider, what is implied in this Title, He is a *Saviour*. 2. Of whom he is a *Saviour*.

First, *In that Christ is thus called a Saviour, there is necessarily implied, that all mankind are lost, that we are all in an undone and hopeless condition.* Thus our Saviour, *Mat. 18. 11.* *For the son of man is come to save that which is lost.* What blessed words of comfort are here! *He is come to save*; it is of his own accord, of his own good will he cometh; there is no necessity, he might have chosen whether he would or no; but, of his own meer will, *he is come*: and then he is

Christ is a  
Saviour to his  
people.

What is  
implied in  
Christs being  
a Saviour.  
1. That all  
mankind  
was lost.

come



come to save: that implyeth, this is the work, he had no other thing to do: if man had not been lost, he had not come into the world. If then it be Christs proper work and Office to save, shall we think, he will be frustrated therein? and then it is to save, in that it comprehended all things. He came to convert, to sanctifie, to iustifie, to glorifie; for Salvation includeth all these. Hence the Scripture speaketh of the Godly, as *saved* already, though but in the way, 2 Tim. 1. 9. *who hath saved us, and called us.*

Lastly, He came to save that, which was lost, actually lost, not in danger to be lost, not in probability to be lost; but lost; and then lost; that doth imply our hopeless estate. Its grace must finde us out, its Christ that must seek us out; as the good Shepherd did his wandring sheep. So that we see in what condition every man is, though never so great, wise, and learned, till he hath an Interest in Christ; though a Great man, a *lost* man; though a Rich man, yet a *lost* man, and that to all Eternity, for ever *lost*, till this Saviour doth recover. What then hast thou to do, but to sit down, and bewail thy loss? to aggravate thy loss? Oh wretched and undone man, *I have lost God, I have lost his image, I have lost Eternal glory.* Is it not a reproach to thee, to see how thy heart can mourn, and melt, for outward losses? I have lost my dear Relations, I have lost all I am worth; and to have it like a stone and a rock, in this particular? It is one thing to be lost, and another thing to be sensible of this. All men by nature are lost, though they do not feel it, though they rejoyce, and are carnally jolly: but then, some few only, whose hearts God doth soften by his Grace, they feel, and groan under this lost estate.

2. What kinde of Saviour is Christ? Even a spiritual one.

2. We are to consider, what kinde of Saviour he is, and what kinde of Salvation it is: And now that is plain, he is not a temporal Saviour, but a spiritual one. so the Angel interpreteth it, for he shall save his people from their sinnes, Mat. 17. 21. In the Old Testament we read, that God did raise up his people many temporal Saviours. Thus Moses was a Saviour, Joshua, who hath the same name with Jesus, he was a Saviour: and the Apostle to the Hebrews maketh Joshua the son of Nun, delivering the Israelites from their dangers and enemies, so that at last, he bringeth them into the Land of Rest; to be a Type of Christ, our spiritual Saviour, who delivereth us from all our spiritual enemies, sin, and Satan, not leaving us, till he hath made us sit on Thrones of Glory. Now this carnal Opinion, that Christ would come as a temporal saviour, did almost infect the whole Nation of the Jews; yea the Disciples were leavened with this fower leaven. And because some places of Scripture did plainly speak of the lowliness and afflictions of the Messiah, and other of his glory and greatness, therefore some Jews fancied two Messiahs, one humble, lowly, and poor, the other magnificent and glorious. And certainly, if Christ had come as a temporal Messiah, to vindicate his people from all external bondage, and to bestow on them outward pomp, and greatness, this world would have suited with flesh and bloud; but it is a spiritual Salvation he bringeth; and though natural men do not think so, yet this is the greatest salvation, this alone deserveth to be called Salvation: To be saved from thy sinnes, to be saved from hell, to be saved from damnation. This is that which alone makes happy. The Romans they sacrificed to Jupiter, as their Saviour, and that was only for temporal Deliverances. But with what praise and joy are we to acknowledg Christ our Saviour, who doth thus vanquish our most potent and spiritual enemies? But no hearer can relish this truth, unless he be spiritual; he must be like the man of Jericho, wounded not in body, but in soul, crying out, I am not a dead man, but a damned man, that desireth this oyl to be poured into his wounds.

3. He is an effectual Saviour.

3. As it is a spiritual Salvation, so it is an efficacious, full salvation. Hence he is called σωτήρ and σωτήριον, in the abstract Salvation itself: and we have an excellent Expression, He is able to save those to the uttermost, that come unto him.



him, Heb. 7. 25. He is not an half saviour, he doth not save in part. It is true, this *salvation* is not in one instant perfected, it is done by degrees; the Lord doth not perfectly save us from the spot and blemish of our sinnes. There is the guilt of sin, the power of sin, the filth of sin. Now, even in this life, *Christ* doth save us perfectly from the guilt of sin; so that, *Rom. 8. 1. There is no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus*: as also from the power of sin he delivereth us so, that *Sin shall not have dominion over us, because we are under grace*: only for the presence of sin, and the lusts thereof, exciting and tempting; these are left as the *Jeusites* in the land. *Christ* could perfect his *Salvation* in one instant, but for wise ends, he doth it by degrees. With him it is easie to save, there is no difficulty in it. Indeed this *salvation* is purchased upon hard termes; he was willing to be in those Agonies, and conflicts, he was willing to dy that ignominious death, that we might be saved, so that, he himself seemed to be lost a while, that he might save us; otherwise, by his death he hath obtained a plentiful *Salvation*. There are no sinnes too many, or too great, from which he cannot save. It is true, we meet with an expression, *1 Per. 4. 18. That the righteous are scarcely saved*; which some indeed apply to a temporal deliverance, that they do hardly escape outward afflictions; for the *Apostle* had formerly spoken that *Judgment must begin at the house of God*. But if we apply it to the *spiritual Salvation* of a godly man, then it is true, even a godly man is scarcely saved. Not, that there is want, or any defect in *Christ*; not that his blood can difficultly do it, but, because the way to *Salvation* is so straight a way, so contrary to flesh and blood, and the Oppositions are so many, to retard, and divert, that therefore he is hardly saved. Were it not for the preserving Grace of God keeping of us, when we do not keep our selves, it is impossible, that the most holy man should be saved. Yet, if we consider *Christ* himself, the *Saviour*, the godly soul may take so much encouragement from his Fulness; and see more in him to save, then can be with his sinnes, (yea, if all the sinnes of the world were likewise upon his score,) to condemn and destroy him.

In the next place, let us consider, *Who they are, to whom he is a saviour*. For, Who is *Christ* though he be a *saviour*, yet it is not of all men; the greater part, not only of a *Saviour* to? mankind in the general, but of such as are within the Church, will be damned. Therefore the *Apostle* distinguisheth mankind into two sorts of persons, *2 Cor. 3. 15.* the *σωζόμενοι*, and the *ἀπολλύμενοι*: such as are to be saved, and such as are to perish. not that this doth redound to the blame of any Decrees of God, about the *salvation* of some men only, or to the particularity of *Christ*'s death; as if some had a desire, and would have been saved, but *Christ* would not save them; but because, in the mento perish, their own sinnes do indispose them for *salvation*, and they do wilfully and obstinately thrust it away far from them. And then the *σωζόμενοι*, they are such, who by the meer grace of God are saved from Hell, that would have been damned as well as others; only the Grace of God did from the first to the last preserve them for this Blessedness. In this sense it is, *Act. 2. 47. The Lord added to the Church such as should be saved*. Not that this word denoteth a present Disposition, whereby a man doth escape the sinnes of the world, (though all that are saved shall do that,) but the mercifull Grace of God pulling them out, as he did *Lot* from *Sodom*; (for there its said) *When he ingred, the Lord being mercifull to him*. So it is here, we are unwilling to come out of this *Sodom*, unwilling to be delivered from our lusts; and so are unwilling to be saved. But God being mercifull to us, by his omnipotent power he changeth our hearts, and maketh us, of refractory and unwilling, ready and obedient. Well then, who are these saved ones? A great Question, and necessary. For would it not be more than all the world, to finde thy self one in the number of these saved ones, when thousands, and thousands shall perish in everlasting flames.



I shall not enlarge in this, but give some brief Descriptions of them.

1. Some of  
mankinde.

First, *It's some of mankinde that he cometh to save*: not any of the *Apostate Angels*; which doth infinitely commend the love of this Saviour to lost man. The Apostle taketh notice of this aggravation, *Heb. 2. 16. For verily he took not upon him the nature of Angels.* Who would not have thought, Christ would come rather to save *lost Angels*, than *lost men*? *Angels* are of more noble and excellent natures than men. *Angels*, if saved, would have done God more service, and brought him more glory than men. We see, if a learned, if a great man in place and power, be converted, how much he may do for God beyond an inferiour man: and then, much more would a saved *Angel* have done, than the most able men. Yet such was the love of God, that his only Son must come from his bosome, to save lost man.

2. The  
repenting,  
believing  
sinner.

But Secondly, It is not all lost men that he cometh to save, *but the humbled sinner, the repenting and believing sinner.* He must be a *sinner*, for if he were not so, he needed not a *Saviour*; hence he saith, *Matth. 9. 13. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to Repentance*: that is, either such as thought themselves righteous, that were presumptuously confident thereof; or else, (as others) those that are indeed *righteous*, if any such could be, Christ came not to them. Hence this consideration of being a sinner is not to discourage thee, is not to keep thee off from a *saviour*; for if thou wert not a sinner thou didst not need a *Saviour*: Who should come to a *saviour* but a sinner? to the Physician but the sick? Hence *Paul* comforted himself under this, when he had been such a Persecutor, and Blasphemer, that *Christ came to save sinners, whereof he was chief, 1 Tim. 1. 15.* But I add, it must be *the humbled sinner*, the wounded sinner, that feeleth himself perishing; as the Disciples in the waters, feeling themselves ready to sink, cryed out, *Master, save us, we perish, Matth. 8. 25.* So it must be such a broken-hearted sinner, that feeleth himself dropping into Hell, falling into those eternal flames, and therefore cryeth out, *O Lord Christ save me, else I perish.* We may read, *Mat. 11. 28.* who they are that have the Scepter of Grace held out towards them, and are invited to come into his presence, *even such as labour, and are heavily laden*, that have no rest in their soules as yet, because of sin; neither their beds, nor their houses, neither their gardens, nor their wealth can give them any rest.

3. They are  
saved from sin,  
and the world.

Hence, in the third place, *They are such as are saved already from the evil and wicked wayes of the world.* There is a twofold salvation; the one, from *Hell and damnation*: and many look only upon this as *salvation*. But then, there is a *salvation from the evil customes, and wicked wayes of the world*: and he that hath not this *salvation* will never have the latter. Therefore *Act. 2. 37.* when *Peters* hearers were pricked in their heart, (that is a preparatory way to conversion) they asked, *Men and brethren what shall we do?* They would gladly be saved from the guilt of these sinnes. Then observe, what counsel the Apostle giveth, yea, he did it with much exhorting and testifying, *v. 40. save yourselves, or be ye saved from this untoward generation*: that is, Be not in the number of those that do resist Christ; that will not believe his Doctrine, and miracles, but escape from them: they are in a dangerous estate. Therefore if thou wouldest be saved hereafter, see, Art thou saved already? art thou delivered from the number of those wicked and ungodly men who will not obey Christ? How greatly would a man roaring in Hell be affected with such mercy, as to be delivered from those torments? But, it is no less to be saved from those ungodly wayes, thou didst once live in: to be saved from the wicked companions, and the inticements of lusts, that once thou wast intangled in.

4. Christs  
people.

Fourthly, *They who are to be saved are Christs people and none else.* Such as take him for a *Lord*, as well as a *saviour*. Every wicked wretch loveth to hear, that Christ is a *saviour*: but then, if thou enquirest to whom, this will marr all thy hopes;



hopes; *He will save his people from their finnes*, Mat. 1. 21. *his people*, that is, such as do accept of him, and receive him, as their *Lord* and *Master*; who do cordially submit to his Lawes, and Ordinances. So that, these two words, *Christs people* do shut out a very great part of of the world from this salvation; they have neither part or lot herein. Is the praphane man one of *Christs people*? no, he is one of his enemies, one of his adversaries; he saith, *We will not have Christ raign over us*.

Fiftly, *They that are saved are very few, comparatively, to those that are damned*. Christ, though he be a sufficient saviour, to save the whole world, yet he is an actual efficacious saviour but to few only: therefore, they are called a *little flock*. Hence when one put that Question to our Saviour, *Whether there would but few be saved*, Luke 13. 23. Though our Saviour did not directly answer him, as proceeding from curiosity, yet he did implicitly resolve it, when he bid that man *strive to enter in at the straight gate, for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able*. There will be a time, when a saviour will be in request, though for the present we seek after other saviours. But alas, Will thy riches save thee? will thy wealth save thee at that day? If Christ then be a Saviour, and salvation is the great end of thy soul, to prepare for that ought to be thy greatest care and delight. Better never have been born, then not to be saved hereafter. Oh remember, now is the acceptable time of thy salvation, now Christ proffereth to be a Saviour. In his first coming his profession is, that *he came not to judg, but to save the world*, John 12. 47. But at his last coming, he will then appear, *not to save, but to jage the world*. Oh then that men should be so besotted, and bewitched, as to neglect this salvation offered! Oh what terror will it be, to hear millions of persons adjudged for their finnes to eternal destruction! then in horror to cry out, *Oh Christ save us, Lord save us*, but it will be too late.

The Second Doctrine I shall but only name; which is,

*That the Lord Jesus is Christ; that is, the Messias, the anointed one, he is a Christ, that he may be a Jesus*.

5. The saved are but few in comparison of the damned.

Jesus is the Christ, the anointed of God.

Now Christ is no more then Anointed: and because in the Old Testament Kings, and Priests, and sometimes Prophets were anointed to that Office, and thereby were made sacred, and inviolable; *Touch not my anointed, and do my Prophets no harm*: hence in allusion Christ is said to be anointed, not indeed with material oyl, but with the *holy Ghost*; which is called the *oyl of gladness*, Psal. 45. 7. And from hence we have our names, *Christians*, as much as *anointed ones*; A glorious title implying our participation of Gods Spirit, and his Graces. Hence the Apostle 1 John 2. 20. *But ye have an unction from the Holy One*. and at the 21<sup>th</sup> verse in this Chapter, God is said, to have *anointed us*. I shall therefore put off this excellent point of our anointing by Christ, till we arrive at that Text.



---

S E R M. CXXII.

*Of Assistants required in the Ministry :  
false Charges laid against it ; and the happy  
Agreement of it.*

---

2 COR. I. 19.

*Who was preached among you by us, even by me, and Sylvanus, and Timotheus.*

**T**He next Particular considerable is, *The Ministerial and instrumental Cause of the preaching of Christ*: and there we have three named. The First and principall is, *Paul himself*. The other two Colleagues and Associates are, *Sylvanus, and Timotheus*. Calvin propounds the Question, *Why Apollo was not named as well as these?* and he giveth this Answer, *That probably these only were charged with the same Calumnies that Paul was, because they were his Attendants, and Companions in his spiritual peregrinations: and therefore he would defend their names as well as his own.* Concerning *Timotheus*, which is *Timothy*, we have spoken already from the first verse. Only concerning this *Sylvanus*, there is some doubt; but the most learned do make him to be the same with *Sylas*, mentioned often in the *Acts of the Apostles*, as a companion of *Paul*: hence some would expound that Periphrastical expression, 2 Cor. 8. 18. *The brother whose praise is in the Gospel of Sylas*, as not being applicable to *Luke*. *Sylas* and *Sylvanus* are generally thought to be the same name, though some would make them two names of one person: yea, some would make them two distinct persons, which hath no probability. The word cometh from an Hebrew root, which is to *send*, and so is the same with *Apostolus*, an *Apostle*, one that is sent. We may read often of this man, as being eminent in the Gospel-Ministry. *Paul* inscribeth both his Epistles to the *Thessalonians*, with his name, as well as his own, putting it also before *Timotheus*. He with *Barnabas* were chosen by the Synod at *Jerusalem*, to distribute the Apostolical letters, having this character, They were *chief among the brethren*; they were in great eminency and esteem. We read also, when there was that *ἁπόμηνος*, a sharp contention between *Barnabas* and *Paul*, (we see the frailties of the best in this; for I cannot approve of those that take the word in a good sense, because it is so used Heb. 10. 24.) that *Paul* chose *Sylas* to be his companion (and no wonder he nameth him here) in this text; for he was a special coadjutor to *Paul* in the planting of the Gospel at *Corinth*; for you may read, *Act*. 18. 5. how that, when *Sylas* and *Timotheus* were come to him thither, being afore sent for by him, it is said, *Paul was pressed in spirit, and testified unto the Jews, that Jesus was Christ*. *Paul* then took more courage, having these Companions, and was the more animated to discharge his office: so that, it was not for modesty, as *Chrysostome* hinteth, that *Paul* doth assume him to this Colleagueship,



Colleagueship, but also, because there was need of his help: the harvest being great at *Corinth*, there needed many labourers: and withall he conjoyneth these himself, to shew the harmony and consent that was between him and the other Ministers in preaching of Christ. So that from the conjoyning of these with *Paul*, there are three Observations deduceable, which shall be briefly dispatched at this time. The first is,

*That whereas the Ministerial labour and work is great, there needeth the more assistance, and help from others.*

*Paul* himself alone is not able to do all the work that this Church of *Corinth* doth require, and therefore he calleth in other Labourers to assist him therein. Hence our Saviour directs us to pray unto God, that where there is work for a Ministry, suitable Ministers may be sent thither, *Matth. 9. 37, 38. The harvest truly is plenteous, and the labourers are few.* He compareth a people prepared by grace for the Ministry, to the harvest: now, as it is a high degree of laziness to be idle in harvest; thus it would be inexcusable in the Ministers of God, if they should be loitering and sluggish, when the souls of people are ready to receive the good message of the Lord. Two things the Scripture taketh notice of in harvest; the joy of harvest, and the labour in harvest; and both these are to be seen in a people fitted for Ministerial work, for Instruction, for Reformation. There is infinite matter of joy to the people, and to the Minister: whereas, to meet with a people that are like a field of bryars and thorns, as *Ezekiel* did, this is wholly discouraging. The people may rejoyce, because God gave them such a willing mind. How many Congregations are there, that cannot be called an *harvest-field*, but a *wilderness*, an *heath*, a *dunghill*? Now, it is the meer goodness of God, that maketh such a difference between Congregations: some are a stiff-necked, obdurate, and prophane people: others, a willing, attentive, and a ready people. But God makes Congregations as well as persons, to differ one from another. Then there is joy to a Minister; it is comfortable to be plowing and sowing upon fruitful ground. What joy is there to plow and sow upon a rock? The same it is to preach to a senseless and stupid people. As there is joy, so there is labour; none must be a sluggard at that time: and truly the people must labour, and the Minister must labour; and so both joyn together, for the bringing of men to Heaven. Now, because it is such pitty to see a field of corn perish, because there cannot any workmen be had, to cut it down; how much more is it to have a people damned for want of a faithful and diligent Minister? Therefore saith our Saviour, *Pray the Lord of the harvest that he would send labourers into his harvest.* It's Gods harvest; it's his corn, and therefore we may the more effectually prevail with him in prayer, for this matter. And you see here what the title of the Ministers is, they are *Labourers*, and *labourers in harvest*, which is the forest. He saith, *The labourers are few*: there were many Priests and Scribes, but few *Labourers*. Hence, though the people lived under their Ministry, who read and expounded the Law every day, yet, because it was done so corruptly, our Saviour had compassion on them, as sheep without a shepherd. So that such as enter upon this work, must not dream of ease and idleness. All the Names the Scripture giveth them, denote hard work and labour. It is matter of solicitude and care, more than honour and dignity. And truly, What Minister is there, who reading the labours, zeal and diligence of *Paul* in his Ministry, may not cry out, *Oh me a dwarf to such a Giant!* If no Minister should be saved, unlesse he be a *Paul*, what would become of most of us? Again, they are called *Labourers*; therefore this confuteth the fancies of common people, that think the Ministers doth not labour at all, that he hath his Maintenance for his ease and idleness. As it

Where Ministerial labours are great, there needeth the more help from others.



there were no labour, but what is bodily : the labour of the mind, of the heart is greater than that. The Labour of a godly Magistrate, and of a godly Minister, is transcendent to all other Labours. Indeed, *Who is sufficient for these things?* saith *Paul*, 2 Cor. 2. 16. Men are sufficient for earthly employments: we cannot say, Who is able to be a Tradesman, to be an Husbandman: but we must, Who is able to be a Minister? So that is a monstrous inconsideratenesse, though coming from pride and covetousnesse, that the *Pope* would have all the Churches in the world to be his charge, and Bishops but his Curates; yea some, *Bishops*, *Metropolitans* and *Diocesans*, they plead to have all the *Diocesses* to be their charge, only not assuming other Pastors, *in partem sollicitudinis*, as *Cyprian* did. Even as *Ignatius* also in his Epistle *ad Trallianos*, calleth *Presbyters* *ovēdēvras* to the Bishops. But alas! if a man be not able to be a Pastor to one Congregation, how can he be to many? If *Paul* would have *Sylvanus* and *Timotheus* to help in this Church of *Corinth*, how much more doth the *Pope* and such *Metropolitans* need assistance? As for their distinction of inspection *per se, vel per alium*, that will not be made good by the Scripture; which commandeth Pastors to have a personal residency, and government over their own flock. Hence God hath appointed severall Officers in the Church, and given various gifts, that all may be employed for the good of the Church: whereas, though *Paul* was supposed only faulty about his breach of promise, yet they charge *Sylvanus* and *Timotheus* with the same inconstancy, thinking all were alike. In the second place we observe,

Where there is any fault in one Minister the people are apt to charge it upon all.

*That where there is anyone real or supposed fault in one Minister, people are apt to charge it upon all other Ministers, as if they were all alike.*

It was for this that *Paul* doth not only apologize for himself, but his Associates also. But how unreasonable is this, grant that some were truly blame-worthy, must all be so? If in the Old Testament there were many false prophets, that *daubed with untempered mortar*, that cried *peace, peace* to sinners, when *destruction was at hand*; shall we therefore condemn the good Prophets, who reproved even the greatest and most mighty for their sins? Because *Judas* was a thief, and for filthy lucre sake betrayed Christ, shall we condemn all the Apostles, making them to be no better? Must *Sylvanus* and *Timotheus* be accused, because they thought *Paul* was inconstant and light? yet thus it falleth out continually, and that from these Grounds,

The grounds of it.

1. The policy and enmity of false Teachers.

First, *The policy and enmity of false teachers, who like Haman think it a small matter to destroy one Mordecai, unlesse they root out the whole race of the Jews.* Thus the false Apostles concluded; Though *Paul* was disgraced and vilified, yet if *Sylvanus* and *Timotheus* be in esteem and authority, our Kingdom will fall to the ground. It is therefore the adversaries design to cast dung in the faces of all the faithfull Ministers of Christ, that so there might not one be left, that should be usefull in their place.

2. The indiscretion of the people.

A second Ground is, *From the injudiciousnesse and indiscretion of people; who are credulous, and apt to believe all rumours and reports.* How could it be, that the Pharisees by their calumniating Christ as an Impostor, and a Blasphemer, should prevail with the greater part of the people to be on their side? because they were blinde, and led by the blinde, they would not make use of their own judgement; they would not examine, and try, whether things were so, or no.

3. The natural enmity in man against the Ministry.

And then the third Ground is, *From the natural enmity that is in all wicked men to the Office of the Ministry, when faithfully discharged.* That is a burden to them; they must needs say with *Ahab* to such faithfull *Michaiahs*, *We hate him, because he alwayes prophesieth evil.* Alas! godly Ministers cannot give any comfort, cannot promise peace to such ungodly persons, therefore



therefore they have hated againſt them, and are glad to receive any falſe report concerning them. Miniſters are compared to *Light*, and to *ſalt*; now the Light muſt needs be offensive to diſtemper'd eyes, and Salt to ſoars. Thus if the Miniſtery be powerfull to enlighten, to convince, to reprove, no ungodly man can endure this. Therefore it is, that the office of the Miniſtery, when faithfully managed, is ſo great a trouble to wicked men. They are thieves, therefore cannot endure this light: they cry out with *Ahab*, *haſt thou found mee, O my enemy?* Every Sermon that is powerfull is as bitter as gall and wormwood to them; and therefore there being ſuch an enmity and ill-will againſt them, it is no wonder, if they be quickly prejudiced, and will not believe there is a godly or faithfull Miniſter in the whole Church of God. But I haſten to the Laſt Obſervation; and that is,

*It is a moſt bleſſed and happy thing, when all the Miniſters of God agree with one conſent to advance Chriſt.* 'Tis an happy thing when all the Miniſters of God agree to advance Chriſt.

As *Luke* calleth it, chap. 1. *The mouth of all the holy Prophets which have been ſince the beginning of the world.* It was but one mouth as it were. They all agreed in the ſame Doctrine, *Paul* and *Sylvanus* and *Timotheus*; they all preach the ſame Chriſt; they were not *yea*, or *nay*. This accord and agreement among the Miniſters of the Goſpel is of ſo great concernment, that our Saviour in his valedictory prayer, doth with much efficacy and vigor preſs this Petition, That his Diſciples may be one, and one in the moſt near manner imaginable, even as *the father and ſon are one*. I ſhall not enlarge on this, becauſe heretofore much ſpoken off; only I ſhall inſtance in ſome uſeful Effects and conſequences of this happy Agreement. Only before I do that, we have cauſe to take notice of the goodneſs of God, and that *ποικιλία & σοφία*, manifold wiſdome of God, whereby he hath provided many Offices, many Officers for his Church, and thoſe variously gifted; and all for the ſpiritual benefit of our ſoules: ſome are *Barnabasses*, ſome are *Boanerges*. Thus as the Kings Daughter is ſaid to be cloathed with needle work of divers colours; ſo hath God richly adorned his Church with variety of abilities, that if men be not converted, the greater will be their condemnation. For whereas Auditors are of divers appetites, ſome are for doctrinal Preaching, ſome for affectionate; ſome are for legal terrible Sermons, others for ſweet Evangelical diſcourſes: if Chriſt ſend *Embassadors* thus qualified every way, what can they look for, who are not by theſe ſeveral baits allured and taken? For this cauſe we have Chriſt himſelf upbraiding the *Jews*, that no kinde of heavenly way would pleaſe, no kinde of dreſſing the Word of life was acceptable to their palates, *Matth. 11. 18.* *John came neither eating nor drinking, and they ſay, he hath a devil. The ſon of man came eating and drinking; and they ſay, Behold a friend of publicans and ſinners.* Hereupon he compareth them to children playing in the markets; ſaying, *we have piped to you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.* Thus nothing would do any good to them. Admire then Gods goodneſs, that hath thus abundantly provided for thee. Do not ſimply and enviously compare one Miniſters gifts above another, but adore the mercy of God, that uſeth all the different abilities of men for the Churches good. This premiſed, we may from the harmony and Agreement of Miniſters, in advancing Chriſts Kingdom ſee

First, *The greater Confirmation of the truth.* If out of the mouth of two or three witneſſes, then how much more out of the mouth of many thouſand witneſſes is every truth abundantly confirmed. How canſt thou give way to any atheiſtical thoughts? whether there be a God, or a day of Judgment, or an

The effects of this Agreement.

1. The greater confirmation of the truth.



an heaven, or an hell; when thou shalt hear so many thousands of Gods servants in all ages witness to this thing. All the *Prophets* and *Apostles*, men renowned for holiness, for miracles, they all preached the same Doctrines that we do to you. And therefore consider with thy self what a cloud of witnesses thou gainst by thy unbelief.

2. The greater defence of the truth.

2. *The greater consent and harmony, the greater defence there is for the truth.* The old rule is, *vis unita fortior*. Our Saviour confirmeth it, when he saith, *A Kingdome divided against it self cannot stand*. What advantages do the enemies of Gods Church make by the Divisions, and different Judgments of men, in the Reformed Church? The Papist doth confidently conclude, that all will turn to them at last; for, say they, you have so many Sects amongst you, and one saith he hath the spirit of God; and another he hath; but all contrary to one another. Now although it were easie to recriminate, yet this difference and division is greatly to be lamented. A late Papist saith, (*Ford against Taylor*) *That seeing Protestants write against Protestants, and fight against Protestants; and that for the Protestant Religion: he hopeth, that at last all will see cause to turn to the Catholique Religion*. But, not to tell them of their Divisions, though our differences are a great stumbling-block, yet to any settled judicious Christian they should not prove so; for the Scripture doth so evidently foretell, that *there must be heresies*: and that *false Prophets will arise*, that shall come in such deceivable wayes, that they would *deceive the very Elect, if possible*: and also, that God doth for wise ends suffer all such rents to be, that none should stagger thereat, yea the approved will be made more manifest: and this file will get off the rust from the iron: this winnowing will drive the chaff from the wheat.

3. The greater conviction of the impenitent and un-believing.

Lastly, *This harmony will be for the greater conviction of every one that shall abide in his unbelief and impiety*. For what a stock or stone art thou, if so many droppings will not at last enter into thee? Go from one Minister to another, dost thou not hear every one cry down prophaneness, encourage to godliness? If you hear hundreds of faithfull Ministers, what is the work of all, but to subdue sin, to dispossess Satan, to bring men into obedience unto Christ: Do we not all come with the same Embassage? Intreating of you to be reconciled to God; and to *agree with this adversary while you are in the way*. What can more convince, yea confound than this? It was this which brought utter destruction upon *Jerusalem*: there was then no more remedy, *2 Chron. 36. 15, 16*. It was not one or two, but many Messengers he sent; and yet all these were refused, with the same disobedient heart. All the Prophets and faithfull Pastors that have ever been in several ages will rise up against thee for thy condemnation in that day, directly, or indirectly, one way or other they will witness against thee.



S E R M. CXXIII.

*The truths of Christ and the Ministers of it are  
alwayes the same.*

2 COR. I. 19.

*Was not Yea and Nay, but in him was Yea.*

**VV**E are now arrived at the last Particular to be considered in this Verse; which is, The Predicate affirmed of the Doctrine preached by Paul and his Associates: and that is, *It's not Yea, and Nay, but Yea.* The expression hath been explained already. The sense is, That the Doctrine of Christ is certain, constant, and immutable. As also, that such only are to be accounted of, as true Doctors, who do adhere to the same truth. For Calvin saith gravely upon the Text, That this taxeth all versatil and Proteus-like men, who can transform themselves into any shape; preach one time one Doctrine, for their advantage; and then again change, and preach the contrary: or else, for sinfull fear, do at one time assert such Doctrines, as true, and afterwards retract and recant them again: whereas the truth of Christ is like Christ himself, *The same yesterday, to day, and for ever*, Heb. 13.8. and like God himself, *who changeth not: yea, in whom is no shadow of change.* So that from the words we may obierve,

*That it is a proper note of Gods truth, and true preachers thereof, that they are alwayes the same.*

Gods truth,  
and so the  
true Preachers  
of it are  
alwayes the  
same.

There is no change, no contrariety in their Doctrines. As the Apostle (you heard) expressed it, *If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make my self a transgressor*, Gal. 2.18. It is in an heynous manner to transgress, when a Minister is thus contradictory. This Doctrine is the more to be observed, because Stapleton in his Antidotes upon this Text maketh a long harangue, to demonstrate, that Luther, Melancthon, Zwinglius, Calvin, all the eminent Reformers, cannot be the true Apostles of Christ; because in their writings there was yea and nay; one while they preached such and such things; at another time the clean contrary. Hence he brings a passage out of Zwinglius confessing that he did *tempori, not rei scribere*; he did write to serve the time, not the matter: that he could not deliver pearl, because for the present auditors like swine would trample it under their feet, and rend him also; especially Melancthon is instanced in, as a very inconstant man, in whose judgment they could put no confidence. Hence he alledged a Synod of the Flaccians, who were rigid Lutherans, that call his Common-places, *secos communes*, and not *Locos communes*; and much more to this purpose. We finde him triumphing in the uncertainty of the Protestants Doctrine; so that although we know what they hold this year, we cannot tell what they will the next, and in the constancy of



of their Popish Religion, which they have adhered unto for many years. To all this we will readily grant, that the truths of Christ are alwayes the same; there cannot be any more new truths, than a new Christ, than a new Biblie; and therefore we will grant the *Thesis*, but deny the *Hypothesis*, or application of it to *Protestants*; that wheresoever there is *yea* and *nay*, there cannot be the truths of Christ. But that we may thoroughly understand this point, let us consider these particulars,

1. We must distinguish between the external formes of Gods worship and doctrinals.

First, *That we must distinguish between the external administrations, and formes of Gods worship, and the doctrinals; between the Didacticalls and the Rituals.* For the former, though appointed by God himself, yet we plainly see a great a teration therein. What a vast difference is there between the service and Sacraments of God, in the old, and in the new Testament? There was *Circumcision*, and the *Paschal Lamb*; we have *Baptism*, and the *Lords Supper*: there were Sacrifices, and many external Rites, and Ceremonies, which when Christ the substance came, they presently vanished, as the blossome falleth when the bud cometh. This great change, with some other Arguments, made the *Marcionites* of old conclude, that it was not the same God of the Old, and New Testament, but different; but that is absurd. The Church administrations, though by Gods command, are now altered; so that it would be a heynous thing to circumcise children, to offer Sacrifices to God; though once it was the peoples duty. Here you see then, there is a lawfull *yea and nay*; a time when we might circumcise, and a time when we must not circumcise. And if you say, Doth not this argue inconstancy in God? doth not this contradict that glorious Attribute of his *immutability*? I answer, No; for God doth here as the Physician with a diseased person, that sometimes administred one kinde of Physick, and sometimes another; according as the nature of the disease requireth: or, as the husbandman soweth his ground, sometimes with one seed, and sometimes with another. God then was pleased to appoint such a temporary worship, and afterwards to appoint another, which was more suteable to the Church, being now no longer an infant, as the Apostle insinuateth, *Gal. 3.1.* As therefore the mother ordereth her childe otherwise, while a childe, than when an adult person; so did God with his Church. But then, if we come to the *Doctrinals*, we shall finde, that the same truths necessary to salvation were in the Old Testament, as the New; *Abraham*, *David*, and all the Godly were justified by *faith in Christ*, as well as the Believers in the Gospel. This indeed is that which the *Socinians* pertinaciously deny: they think that the Godly in the Old Testament did not believe in Christ; that this is a peculiar new duty required under the Gospel, and never before, *viz. to believe in Christ*. But the Apostle in his Epistle to the *Hebrews* doth admirably open the mysterious signification of those *Jewish* ceremonies and sacrifices, shewing that Christ was represented therein, and that it was not the blood of *Rams* and *goats*, but of *Christ*, that did take away sin. Hence *Abraham* is said to see *Christs day*, and rejoyce. *1 Cor. 10.* they are said to drink of the spiritual rock, which was *Christ*: and *Act. 15. 10, 11.* Peter and the Councel speaking of the yoke laid upon our fathers, addeth, *But we believe, that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they.* The Doctrine then of *Jesus Christ*, of the *Trinity*, of *eternal Life* were in the old Testament as well as the New; only more implicitey and obscurely; the Old Testament being the New hidden and covered; the New being the Old revealed and explained: so that, the Old and New Testament do not contain old and new Doctrine essentially, but gradually; as we say, the old and new moon, not meaning two moons, but distinct discoveries of light therein.

2. Between the growth and the change of truth.

2. We are to distinguish between progress and growth in the same truth, and the



the alteration or change of truth into error. And truly this is of great consideration; for this very particular will obviate all the calumnies of the Papist. Let it be granted, that the first Reformers did not at first view, see all the truths of the Christian Religion, but that by degrees they had scales fall off from their eyes, and some things that at first they thought true, or tolerable, afterwards they rejected, as false and abominable. And thus Calvin (*de scandalis*) answereth the Papists, who calumniate us, saying, *If you had the spirit of God, why did ye not see all truth presently? Why was it that some things did appear false to you afterwards, which did not so at first? This, saith he, is to envy us proficiency in the truth; and to expect, that the Sun in the morning should shine as gloriously as at noon day.* So that it is one thing *addere adificium fundamento*, as Austin calleth it, and another thing to make a new Foundation; Thus Lyrinensis, when he made this Objection, *To what use are Doctors and Officers of the Church, if so be they must only receive the Doctrine delivered, and not excogitate new by their own wit?* He answereth, There is *perfectus*, but not *permutatio* allowed, a growth, but not a change. The work of the Ministers of the Gospel is not to finde out new, real, fundamental truths, no more than a new Christ, or a new Bible. he that cannot see by one Sun, would not by twenty; and he that will not be convinced by one Bible, would not, if there were more. Yet they are not useless, for these Fundamentals they are dayly to confirm, to explain, to polish, and affectionately to improve for Sanctification more and more: so that, as he saith, they must not deliver *nova*, yet they may *novè*: not new things, but in a new manner. When a childe groweth up into a man, he still retaineth his humane nature, though there be an increase in his stature; but if this childe should grow into a horse, or a bear, then this would be a change of his species, and his nature: Thus the Church and her Officers they are to grow in more light, in more knowledg, in more faith; but still in the same truth: whereas, if they degenerate into Errors and false Doctrines, then the *species* is altered: now it is not hony but gall, it is not gold but dross, not meat but poyson: So that if we see eminent men growing out of those errors, and those Superstitions they were once intangled in, you must not call this *yea* and *nay*, but a laudable duty: for we see the spirit of God communicating it self by degrees: Even as the Sun doth not presently arise to its vertical point: so neither doth the spirit of God reveal all things at once: It cometh in by degrees, he could perfect our understandings even in this life, as much as they shall be in heaven, so that, we shall no longer know in part: but he is pleased to work gradually, even as he did make the world, not in an instant, but successively. Thus we see he did to the very Apostles, they were under his Instruction and Government a good while, and yet were ignorant in many particulars, till at last he confirmed them from his spirit from above. The Protestants then are not guilty of *yea* and *nay*, though they did not at first discover all the abominations of Popery. Neither may we charge any particular Minister for *yea* and *nay*, if out of error he proceed to truth, if from darkness he attaineth to more light: For, although many Heretical persons may shrowd themselves under the serious name of new light, yet it is plain, that both Pastors and people are to grow in new light gradually, though not specifically. Thus the Apostle Peter, 1 Pet. 1. 19. commendeth the believers, for attending unto the word of God, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, untill the day dawn, and the day-starre arise in their hearts: not as if ever they could come to light enough, that they need not to attend to Scripture any further,



that they may throw away the Bible as useless, having light enough within them. No, but that *denec*, that *until*, is continual and alwayes, as sometimes it is used.

3. Between a seeming and a real yea and nay.

3. *We are to distinguish between Yea and Nay indeed, and a seeming yea and nay*: between a constant new Doctrines indeed, and those that are apparently so. We grant, that such corruptions, such darkness may cover the face of the Church, that the true Doctrines of Christ may seem new, and be condemned for *novellism*; and the Doctor who preach'd them, be thought to come with his *yea* and *nay*. And thus again *Luther* and *Melancthon* with many others are condemned for their inconsistency. They were once ours, say the Papists, they did once believe as we believed, worship as we worshipped, but now they are a *nay* to their *yea*. This calumny will easily vanish, if you distinguish between *new things indeed*, and *new things appearingly so*. The Protestant Doctrine was not new indeed, if you look to the Scripture and Christ, it is old as they are; but then we grant, that if we consider the *Chaos*, the Church was in at that time, what superstitious abominations did then prevail; we grant, what the Reformers did, all was new, their service new, their Doctrine new; but the iniquity and the corruption of the times made it appear to be so. And indeed Popery is properly the great *Novellisme*: for the Popish Doctrines, the Popish Worship began to creep in, when the Churches of Christ began to degenerate from their Primitive Institution. The change then that is many times in the face of Religion, which doth so offend many, is not indeed so, but in appearance. Those truths of God were formerly professed in the Church; only an Eclipse did arise, which obscured the light of the Sun. As then the Sun is not changed after an Eclipse, we do not see a new Sun: thus it is also with the truths of Christ; the Reformers do not bring new truths, only the darkness is dispelled, and we see them which were long before. It is with us, as with men, whose heads are distempered; we think, such and such things run round, whereas indeed it is a distemper upon us, and it is a signe that we have been corrupted, when old truths seem new to us.

4. Antiquity and consent are properties of a true Church.

4. *We may therefore truly conclude, that antiquity and consent are inseparable properties of a true Church*. That Church which retaineth Doctrines of the greatest Antiquity, and which doth agree with the Primitive Apostolical Churches, that must needs be a true Church, for truth is alwayes alike. That cannot be true Doctrine in one age which is not in another: though men are apt to be changed by the times they live in, yet Gods truth cannot be. When therefore the Papists bring antiquity, and consent as notes of a true Church, we deny they can, or are to be called notes, because it is not *Antiquity* barely, but *antiquity in the true Doctrine*: nor *Consent* meerly so, but *consent with the Primitive Churches Doctrine*. So that True Doctrine is properly the note of the Church; only we add, that *Antiquity and Consent with the Primitive times* do inseparably follow the true Doctrine. Now the ground of this certainty and equality of the truths of Christ is, because they are Gods truths, Christs truths: if they were the truths of mens making, then they might alter and change as they please, ~~if we might sell truth, as the Apostle doth Magistracy,~~ then it might be formed, reformed, and transformed into all the shapes that mens Interests could put them upon; then truth might alter according to the climates, customes, and advantages of men; then truth might be one thing at

Rome,



Rome, and another thing at *Constantinople*: then we might say, such things were truth in one age, and ye the contrary truth in another. Popery was truth in *Queen Maries* dayes, and Protestantisme in *Queen Elizabeths*. And truly some men are so Atheistical, or self-seeking, that they account truth, as the Apostle said, some did godliness, even outward gain; and therefore, when such an opinion is gainfull, then it is truth, but when not so, then it is Heresie.

*Use of Instruction.* How odious Instability and Inconstancy is in matter of Religion, whether it be in private Christians, or publick Officers? It plainly discovereth, that not the truth of Christ, but some other uncertain motive prevaileth with thee; either thy profit, or thy applause, or the times, or customes, or the Lawes of the Land, or some other mutable respect doth work upon thee: and if so, then thou canst not but be a reed shaken with every winde of Doctrine. Thou art then but as an Instrument of musick, making no other sound; nor no longer then thou art breathed into. Profit will make thee a Papist, profit will make thee a protestant, profit will make thee an Heretick. How contrary is such a fickle temper to the nature of Faith? which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.

*Use 2<sup>d</sup> of Instruction.* How false that position is of some Papists, *That the Church may make Articles of Faith*; and that the Authority of the Church maketh the Authority of the Scripture, at least towards us? So that the Scriptures would have no more authority then *Titus Livius*, or *Aesops fables*, in respect of our duty to believe, were it not for the Churches Authority. No less blasphemous is that other comparison of another Papist, resembling the Scripture to a *nose of wax*? If so, then no wonder, if they make what truths, and what religions they please; then we may call it, the Popes truth, the Churches truth, and not the truth of God. It is a ridiculous passage of a Papist (*Ford against Taylor*) saying, *that it is probable, the Church will make that Opinion about the immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary to be an Article of Faith.* As if the Church could make that necessary to be believed, if we would be saved, that was not alwayes so. Why may she not as well make a new Bible, set up a new Christ, as they establish a new Article of Faith?





## S E R M. CXXIV.

## Of Gods Promises to man.

2 COR. I. 20.

*For all the Promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us.*

**T**His Verse is a further confirmation of the constancy and immutability of the Lord Christ, and so by consequence of *Pauls* doctrine. For that Christ is unchangeable, he proveth, in that all the promises which God hath made, they receive their fullnesse and complement in him, and so are therefore true, because fullfilled both in him and by him. This is the Apostles sense in this assertion, which *Calvin* doth well call, *memorabilis sententia*, &c. a memorable sentence, and one of the chiefest Articles of our Religion; for herein is all our faith and confidence seated, that in Christ God maketh his gracious promises to us, by whose efficacy and impetration they be accomplished; so that a promise is fullfilled, not because of any worth or dignity in us, but because of the fulnesse and worth that is in Christ.

1. The words may be taken as an entire Proposition; wherein we have the subject and predicate, with the amplification of it from the finall cause.

The subject is described from the nature of it, *ἐπαγγελίαι* promises.

2. From the universality and extent, *ὅσαι* all promises, as many as are made.

3. From the efficient cause, the promises of God.

4. The predicate, are yea, and are amen in him: Of which in their order.

Let us begin with the Subject, *ἐπαγγελίαι* the promises, manytimes in the plurall number, at other times in the singular; for indeed the covenant of grace is but one large promise, or an ocean emptying it self into many streams; yet sometimes called promises, because of the many things both spirituall and temporall that are particularly promised by God, the summe whereof is contained in that great promise, or *Magna Charta* of the Church, *I will be their God, and they shall be my people*: or else it may be promises in the plurall number, because of the frequent repetition and reiteration of the grand promise of Christ to the Church. Now the word promise is sometimes used for the things promised; as when any are said to inherit the promise, *Heb. 6. 12.* and sometimes for the promise it self. The Greek word, *ἐπαγγελία* is used often in the New Testament, whereas the Ancients did use the word *ἐπαγγελμα* more frequently for a promise: though the Apostle Peter useth that also twice, *2 Pet. 1. 4. 2 Pet. 3. 13.* The theme of it is *ἀγγέλλω*, which cometh of *ἀναλέγω*, say some; and for better pronunciation, *ἀγγέλλω*. But *Eustathius* maketh it to come of *ἀγω*. From this root we have the word *εὐαγγέλιον* in the singular number, and *κατ' ἐξοχὴν* applyed to the Gospel; Whereas among humane Authours the word is for the most part in the plurall number, signifying both glad tidings, and also the reward given to those that brought them; but the Gospel doth only deserve this name of glad tidings, and therefore the word is now appropriated unto that,



that, though ſometimes it ſignifieth, beſides the good thing preached, the very preaching it ſelf, as 1 Cor. 4.15. and therefore when the Apoſtle ſpeaketh of one *whoſe praiſe is in the Goſpel*, 2 Cor. 8.18. the meaning is, one *whoſe praiſe* was in preaching the Goſpel, and labouring therein; not of the Goſpel written by *Evangelists*: for *Evangelium* and *Evangelist*, in that ſence, as it ſignifieth the Goſpel written, or a writer of the Goſpel, is not uſed in the Scripture, but came in afterwards by Eccleſiaſticall uſe. The Greek word *εὐαγγέλιον* ſignifieth in the generall *to declare*, *to denounce*, ſometimes *to accuſe*; hence is that phraſe *δογματίζαντες εὐαγγέλιον* ſpoken of by *Budeus*; but in Scripture uſe it is often taken more particularly for *to promiſe*: Hence *Hefychius*, and out of him *Varinus* rendreth *εὐαγγελία*, *ἐπαγγελία* and *εὐαγγέλιον*; but this is enough for the word: the thing it ſelf hath much comfort and treaſure in it, and to obſerve,

*That God hath made promiſes to his people, all the promiſes of God in Chriſt are Amen.*

God hath made many promiſes in Chriſt to us.

This doctrine deſerveth to be opened theologically, as being the foundation of all our hope; for on Gods promiſe only we can pleade, as we ſee the godly often in their prayers urging that; Not any thing of ours, O Lord, but meerly thy promiſe we do pleade before thee.

And I take notice, That *God might only have dealt with man by his abſolute Sovereignty and dominion*; impoſing only upon him commands to do his duty, without adjoyning any promiſe of a reward, eſpecially ſuch a reward as eternall happineſſe, and truly this maketh much as for our comfort, ſo alſo for our humiliation under all the holy works we do. For it is of Gods meer goodneſſe, that he hath promiſed glory to thy repentance, to thy obedience, after thou haſt done all, God might have annihilated thee; neither would he have done thee any wrong, if he did not put a crown of glory upon thee, after thy holy life; ſo that its gods great condeſcention to deal by way of promiſe with us, and not by way of dominion and command alone; as he might do, he being our Creator and we his creatures.

1. God might have dealt with man by abſolute ſovereignty.

Secondly, *The promiſes that God maketh to us are truly and properly promiſes*; They are more then ſimple and bare assertions of what good he will do to us. We know amongſt men, there is a great difference between a bare affirmation what he will do, and a promiſe; for that addeth a new bond and obligation to a man, for fulfilling his word. Now ſome have thought, that thoſe paſſages which we call *promiſes* are not ſo properly and truly *promiſes*, as meer inſinuations and ſignifications of Gods will and purpoſe what he will do. Thus *Durand* expreſſeth himſelf, *lib.2. diſt. 27. queſt.2.* becauſe happily it may be thought that we attribute imperfection to God, when we ſay, that he *promiſeth* properly; for then thereby would accrue juſtice on mans part, and a right or claim in him to the things promiſed, hereby alſo the liberty of God would ſeem to be infringed, as if he could not beſtow his gifts any other way then *he promiſed*, but theſe are no cogent reaſons. And ſeeing the Scripture doth ſo often call them *promiſes*, and doth ſo conſtantly ſay, *God doth promiſe*; there is no reaſon why we ſhould go from the proper ſignification of the word to an improper, eſpecially there being no imperfection in the act of *promiſing*. For meerly as ſo, that denoteth a dominion and power in him that promiſeth: and certainly if the actuall giving and collation of any good thing, doth not declare any imperfection in God, why ſhould the *promiſing* of it do? For when God hath beſtowed any thing upon us, that is not ſo alienated, as it were, but that ſtill it is his, and at his diſpoſing, to continue or take away, as he pleaſeth: we therefore conclude, that God doth truly and properly, not

2. The promiſes of God are properly promiſes.

in



3. Gods promises do not adde to his simple affirmation, but only are to confirm our faith.

in a metaphoricall fence make promises to his people. Yet

In the third place, *the reason of Gods promising, is not as if that were to adde more confirmation to his simple affirmation, but for condescension to confirm us against our unbelceef and diffidence.* Hence there is a vast difference between *mans promise* and *Gods promise*. For the *promise of a man* doth adde a new tye and obligation to his word, and so his word is made surer in it self, as well as to those whom he promiseth; but when God doth barely declare his will to do such good things for a beleever, this hath truth enough, yea, so much that nothing can be added to make it truer; only because we are apt to conceive of God, after the manner of men, it doth greatly conduce to strengthen our faith, as well as his affirming word; yea, sometimes to his *promise*, God is also pleased to adde his *oath*; all which is not in respect of himself, as if his word could be made truer, but only to antidote the more strongly against that diffidence and distrust which is apt to rise up in our hearts. This the Apostle notably considereth, *Heb. 6. 7.* when he saith, *That God to declare the immutability of his counsell, confirmed the promise by an oath, so that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lye, we might have a strong consolation.* It is not for his own sake that he promiseth, yea, that he sweareth, but for our sakes, *that we might have not only consolation but strong consolation.* O *beatos nos, &c.* cryed *Tertullian*, *Oh happy us, for whose sakes God doth thus swear; but oh us wretched and miserable, if we do not beleeve him thus confirming his promise:* so that the right understanding of Gods promise will make us see, that it is not for his own sake, but our sakes, that he dealeth in a promise-way with us.

4. The rise of all Gods promises is his free mercy.

Hence in the 4<sup>th</sup> place, *The meer originall and rise of Gods promising any good to us, is the bounty, liberality, and free mercy of God.* The Apostate Angels have not the least promise of any good to them, so that being without a promise, they are in that respect altogether miserable; but the Lord having a love to mankind, did freely and graciously make his promise of Christ, and in him all blessednesse to those that are his; Insomuch that the spring of all our happiness is Gods promise. We cannot pleade any worthiness, only thy promises (Lord) that we put thee in minde of, which is like the rainbow, when God beholdeth, that he will not drown the world more; and when God remembreth his covenant, then he worketh all good for his people. Thus when God would delay his help no longer, but deliver his people groaning under their oppressions; It is said, *God remembred his Covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Exod. 2. 24.* there was no *natural necessity*, nor no *morall necessity* that could induce God to make these promises to us. No *naturall necessity*, for God is a free agent, and so doth not as the Bee, that necessarily maketh his honey, God doth not necessarily communicate his goodnesse to us: As God is a free agent, so he is alsufficient; he is perfect and blessed in himself, he needeth not man, he wanteth not his service; and therefore he did not upon this account make any promise, but it was his meer voluntary goodnesse. Again, there was no *morall necessity*, that is, there was no supposed worth or dignity in us, for which it behoved God to make such promises; He found nothing in us but matter of his displeasure and wrath: to us all the threatnings in the Law did belong, and not one promise, Insomuch as the damned in hell have not any promise made to them; they have not the least ground for any hope, no not for a drop of water to relieve them in those scorching flames, so it might be with every man if Gods grace did not interpose; not any promise might have been made for thee, to have the least dependance upon. Thus you see Gods mercy alone to be the ground of all promises.

5. Therefore the fullfilling of his promises is only of grace.

Fifthly, *Because God doth this out of his meer bounty, make a promise of good things to us, the fullfilling of them is not of debt to us, but from his grace and verity.*



verity. And thus it differeth from the promises between man and man, that are made in contracts, or otherwise; there a promise is made, but upon some consideration or work done, which is equivalent to the thing promised: but it is otherwise with God, he promiseth out of grace, and fulfilleth it likewise out of grace. Thus when God hath promised pardon to the humbled sinner, and beleeving not only the promise, but the actall pardoning is of grace; neither is God by his promise become a debtor to us, as if God would be unjust, if he did not bestow such a priviledge upon us; but because, as the Scripture saith, *he cannot lye, or he cannot deny himself*. So that the reason why he maketh good his promises, is not because we have any condignity in our selves to claim those things, but because he is immutable and unchangeable: so that upon this account he maketh good his promises, even because he is God, and cannot lye, or change his minde. Therefore Divines speak well of a twofold *debitum* about Gods promises, *debitum fidelitatis*, and *debitum justitie*; a debt of fidelity, and a debt of justice. When God maketh a promise of eternall life to a godly man, he may urge God with his promise; and there is a debt of fidelity, whereby God hath engaged himself to do this; but we cannot say, God is a debtor to man hereby; no, he is a debtor, as it were, to himself, he cannot go against his own word, his truth will not suffer him to change; but in no respect must we say he is a debtor to man, *reddis debita nulli debens*, it was said of old. This is necessarily to be understood, that so under all the promises of God made to us, we may not look upon our selves, but Gods promise only. But then there is a debt of justice and righteousness, and herein many Papists are proud and arrogant; for they distinguish of Gods promises, those that are for the first grace, and those that are for the second and after grace. They grant the promise of the first grace to be only from a debt of fidelity, but then for the second grace, they maintain a debt of justice. Hence it is that they conclude, that heaven and salvation, though we have it by the promise of God, yet it is by debt of justice, and not meer grace. Hence we read of a dying Monk, who blasphemously uttered these words, *Redde mihi, Domine, vitam aternam, quam debes, siue velis, siue nolis*; but a gracious heart cannot but tremble at such arrogancies. It is true, Paul calleth God a righteous Judge, who will give him a crown of glory: and he telleth the Hebrews, that God is not unrighteous to forget their labour of love, Heb. 6. 10. but righteousness is not here taken strictly for proper justice, but for fidelity and faithfulness. If God should not give heaven to his people, who endure persecution for his Name sake, he would go against his own nature, he would deny his truth, and so even cease to be God; not that he would be unjust properly to man, as if man by doing or suffering any thing for his sake, did that which was equivalent to eternall glory. We see the Apostle defying this, 2 Cor. 4. 17. calling it, but a light affliction, and for a moment, in respect of that eternall weight of glory. And Aristotle observed, that there cannot be justice, or righteousness between us and the gods, and our Parents; for their is no equality, and we owe all to them. And as Durand well argueth, it is so far from justice or righteousness: that we may claim glory, that the more grace God hath given us to prepare thereunto, the more we are beholding to him, and can the lesse pleade for our selves, by how much the more we receive of his grace; so that the more gracious acts we do, we are so far from meriting, that we are the more obliged to God. Yet

Sixthly, Left because all the promises of God are said to be fulfilled of his grace only, and because all works of ours are rejected as causall and meritorious, we should fall into Antinomianism, and fancy to our selves such absolute and irrelative promises, that though abiding and wallowing in our sins, yet we might think it lawfull to run to them as to a city of refuge, and there to be delivered from the guilt of our sins: we must know that the promises of God are of two sorts

6. The promises of God are absolute or conditional.



*sorts, absolute and conditionall; Absolute,* and such are the promises of God, for the working of our first grace in us of conversion, and taking away the heart of stone from us, of which promise the Prophets *Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel* speak; Though some will not allow these to be *promises*, but predictions, yet the very tenour of them doth evidence it. Now these do not suppose, but work all conditions and qualifications in us for other mercies, for it would be absurd to say, God promiseth to give us faith if we do believe, or to renew and change our wills if we will: These absolute promises then are the executions of his decrees of grace and salvation upon the Elect. But then there are *conditional promises*, and such are the promises of pardon to the believer, of eternal glory to him that is godly; only you must know, that they are conditions only in a large sense; they are more properly called *qualifications* and *determinations* of those who are thus to be justified and saved: faith indeed in our justification hath a peculiar notion of being an instrument or supernaturall means to lay hold on Christ, and is not to be called a *condition*, when we speak exactly: You see then that there is no ground for licentiousnesse and dissolutenesse, to venture all upon the gracious promises of God, for they are determined and specified by such qualifications, who shall have either pardon here, or salvation hereafter: Only you must know, that when we call them *conditionall promises*, the meaning is not as if we had power of our own to fulfill these conditions, and so the promises remain in suspense till we perform them; no, these conditions we are enabled to accomplish by the grace of God, they are his gifts as well as our duties; so that there are no conditions required of us, which also we are not enabled unto by the grace of God; that all may glory in Gods grace, and not in themselves, and therefore God hath appointed an order between his gracious gifts; this godliness is for happinesse, holinesse is for glory, faith is for justification, and if we speak exactly, we cannot so well say, Gods promises are conditionall, as the things promised may be conditions to one another by Gods appointment.

7. There may be reasons given why God made such promises. As  
P  
1. To exercise our faith.

Lastly, *There may be good reasons assigned why God is pleased thus to promise;* he might have given and never have made any promise at all; but before he is pleased to bestow the actuall benefits, he is pleased to give us many sure and gracious promises, that he will do such things for us in time: The reasons may be  
First, *Because hereby God would exercise our faith, and teach us to live upon him only;* for when we cannot see any possibility in second causes, when they with *Sarah* have a dead womb, yet because of Gods promise we shall keep up our hearts, as *Abraham* did: Why is it then that the promises of God are in no more esteem and request with us? were it not for them, how many times might thy heart break. Yea, to put our faith to greater experiment, hence it is, that though he hath promised such things, yet his providences seem to crosse all, and after Gods promise, as it was in the *Israelites* deliverance, all things seem to be more unlikely than before.

2. To teach us humility.

A second Reason (for I shall instance in no more) may be *to teach us humility and thankfulness, acknowledging Gods promise alone to be the fountain of all the good we enjoy;* by the promise we are regenerated, by the promise we are justified, by the promise we are glorified; we are what we are only by the promise: hence all the godly are said with *Isaac* to be the *children of the promise*, Gal. 4. 28. by the promise we had our spirituall being and by the promise we are Preserved in it; but this deserves more improvement.





## SERM. CXXV.

*A further Discovery of the Nature and Sorts  
of Gods Promises.*

2 COR. I. 20.

*For all the promises of God, are in Christ, Yea and Amen, &c.*

**O**ur work is to enlarge more upon this usefull and necessary subject, viz. *The promises of God.* And

In the first place, we may give in divisions of the *Promises*, or the distribution of them, as there are *Legal Promises* and *Evangelical Promises*; the ignorant confusion whereof hath caused much mischief in the Church of God. The *Legal Promise* is nothing but the Covenant of works, contained in that expression, *Do this and live.* For as they are cursed, who continue not in all things that the Law requireth: So again, they are blessed, and eternal life is promised to all such, who perfectly obey the Law of God. By this promise God dealt with *Adam.* And although God never transacted with man, when fallen, by this way of promise; yet he was pleased to have the Doctrine of the Law in its full perfection manifested to the people of *Israel*; but in an Evangelical intention, that so the *Israelites* being humbled under their utter impotency and inability ever to performe it, might make their earnest applications unto Christ for help and succour. For what was impossible by the Law, through our weaknesse, Christ made possible through his obedience. Now this *Legal Promise* the *Jewes* generally attended unto, neglecting the *Evangelical* consideration of promises in Christ. The promises to works made unto *Adam* are not intended in this Text: they were not *Yea* and *Amen*, seeing there was no need of a Mediator, if *Adam* had not fallen; onely now all the promises of grace become firme and sure in him. But naturally we regard the *Legal promise* more than *Evangelical.* What labour did the Apostle shew to bring the *Jewes* off from the Covenant of works? And whence is that Pharisaical and Popish principle of self-righteousnesse; but because we trust in our works, and not in the promise? So that it is an excellent proficiency in Christianity, when persons are taken off from being Legal; to be Evangelical; when they doe not slavishly rely upon their works done, but filially depend upon the promise. The Apostle doth excellently, and at large declare the difference between these two, *Galat. 3. and 4. Chapters.* It is strange that any should desire to be under the Law, rather than the promise; yet all Pharisaical Justiciaries are prone that way. What is this but to desire to be under a curse, and perpetual malediction? Whereas the *Evangelical promise* is like the City of refuge to the pursued malefactor. It is better than *Jonah's* gourd against the scorching heat of Gods wrath, because of sinne; for no worme can arise and consume this. So that the *Evangelical promise* being wholly of free-grace, God there-

1. Of the several sorts of promises.

1. The promises of God are either Legal or Evangelical

F f f f

by



by pardoning us freely, sanctifying us freely, justifying us freely, is like the Land of promise flowing with milk and honey. It's to this promise, that every humbled sinner must look, as the *Israelites* stung did upon the brazen serpent. Let therefore the people of God look more to the promise without them: They pore upon their own hearts; they perplex themselves with many doubts and tears; but if thou didst consider what an *Evangelical Promise* meaneth, this would be like oyle poured into thy wounds, when temptations aggravated by Satan, have left thee not so much litle dead, as halfe damned.

2. Promises are either spiritual or temporal.

In the next place, *Promises* are divided in respect of their object matter into *spiritual* and *temporal*. *Spiritual* are such as concern the welfare of the soul: *Temporal* are such as relate to the body and the outward man; for there is no external mercy, but God hath promised it to the godly. Therefore godliness is said to have the promise of this life, and that which is to come, 1 Tim. 4. 8. In deed in the Old Testament *temporal promises* were more frequent, and *spiritual* more rare; and many times shadowed out by the temporal ones. In the New Testament, *spiritual promises* are farre more frequent, and *temporal* ones more rare; yet the New Testament doth abundantly testify this, That all things are the godly mans, whether life or death, 1 Cor. 3. 23. and that onely they have the promise of this life, as well as that which is to come. And certainly, If God hath given us Christ, as the Apostle argueth, Rom. 8. how shall he not with him give us all things else? So that we see the treasure of a Christian, it lieth in Gods promises, both for this life, and the life to come. So that as it falleth out sometimes, a man may have little money for his present use, and yet be very rich in bonds and bills. Thus it is sometimes with a godly man, though he hath a promise of all things, yet for the present he may want all things. As *Abraham* had a promise for the possession of the Land of *Canaan*; and yet for the present had not where to set his foot, as upon his own ground. Onely we must distinguish between the *spirituall* and *temporal promises*, these later are not absolutely promised, but with the exception of the Crosse, and with this limitation, when they are good for us. For seeing these earthly mercies are not absolutely and as indispensably necessary, as Christ and grace are, so therefore no wonder if they be not absolutely promised. If a godly man could not be saved, unlesse he had riches and wealth, unlesse he had health and strength, then he was as sure to have them, as he hath Christ; but that not being so, therefore it is that they have Christ, and yet many times want other things. They have the Ocean, when they cannot have a drop. Again, *Temporal good things* are not absolutely good, but conditionally, and upon supposition; though they may be good in themselves, yet not to thee. As wine may be in it self comforting, but not unto a man in a feaver: Thus it may be, if thou shouldst have riches, they would doe thee hurt; if thou shouldst have health and strength, thy corruptions also would be the stronger. These things are not called good, because they make us good; no, we may make them good or evil. But now Christ is such an infinite good, that thy having of him can never be hurtful to thee: Yea, when he finds thee evil, he can make thee good. It is good to informe our selves thus about the nature of *temporal promises*; for we are ready to murmur and repine, when we find not these promises made good to us; whereas we should rather be thankfull and rejoyce, in that God will not give us that which would doe us so much hurt. And certainly, if thou wert *spiritual*, as thou shouldst be, this would be enough to thee, that *spiritual things* are absolutely promised, that thou art sure to have Christ, to have Heaven, how sick and afflicted soever thy portion may be in this world. Doth it not argue thy heart to be too carnal, when thou mournest for want of outward mercies, and



and yet Christ is thine, God hath sanctified thee, God hath converted thee. Alas hath not God in this done more for thee, than the greatest Emperours in the world, that have not godlinesse? What if thou hast not riches, the greatnesse others have? It may be they have not the Christ, the grace that God hath bestowed on thee. Onely when we say *spiritual* things are absolutely promised, you must distinguish of *spiritual* things: some are *essential* and *necessarily conjoynd* with eternal glory; so that if he have them not, he cannot be saved; such is Regeneration and Justification. Again, others doe much conduce to our eternal happinesse, but are not inseparably joyned with it; such are the degrees of grace, spiritual consolation and joy, as also the assurance of Gods favour. These are precious advantages; more to be desired than the gold of *Ophir*, but they are not absolutely promised to every godly man.

In the second general place, *We are to know, that the promises of God, they are the executions in time of what he had decreed to doe from all eternity.* Infomuch that from Gods promise, we may argue to his predestination; when God promiseth Justification, and pardon of sinne to thee, it is because he hath purposed this according to the counsel of his own will. So when he promiseth to give grace to thee, and the encrease thereof, it is because he hath in mercy ordained thee for this. If you ask then, why is it, such and such promises are fulfilled? You must not have recourse to mans free-will, or any workes that he doth, but to the will of God and his gracious counsel. Hence some expound that place, (*Titus 1. 2.* where it is said, *That God who cannot lie, hath promised eternal life before the world began;*) of his decree to promise: for it is not proper to say, God promised before the world was. Seeing then there was no men to whom the promise could be made; therefore (say they) the meaning is, *He decreed to promise.* But there is another interpretation more probable, which is to render the Greek words, *πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνων*, before the ancient ages, alluding to the first promise that God made to *Adam* upon his fall concerning the womans seed, which was Christ. For till that promise was manifested, there was no difference in respect of hope and comfort between lost mankind, and the Apostate Angels. The promises then of God are but Gods predestination put into execution.

2. Gods promises are the executions of his Decrees.

Hence in the third place, *No wicked men have any promises of God belong to them.* Therefore the state of the *Heathens*, *Ephes. 2.* is said to be *without Christ, and without the promises*; which argueth as desperate a condition, as when those of the old world, were without the Ark, there was a necessity of perishing. It is true, all wicked men, who live within the Church, they cannot in that sense be said to be *without the promises*, as *Heathens* are; for they are under the offer of promises, they are under the external dispensation of them; and because they manifest an outward acceptance of Gods offer with the conditions tendered, therefore we may call them the children of the promise in an externall sense. In which sense, *Rom. 9. 4.* the Apostle speaking of the *Israelites* in the general, saith, *Of whom is the service of God and the promises.* In this sense many were the seed of *Abraham*, not onely after the flesh, but of the promise also; else circumcision, the seal of the promise had not been applied to them: yet they were not the seed of the promise, in the sense the Apostle intendeth, as *Isaac* was; that is, so as to have the true and real benefits of the promise; and in this respect we say, no ungodly man hath any promise of any privilege made to him, abiding in that condition. No promise of pardon, no promise of Gods favour, no promise of any earthly comfort, nor a morsel of bread, or droppe of drinke; he cannot plead any promise

3. No wicked men have any promises belong to them.



in his prayers. And therefore when we may enjoy many outward mercies, these come not by vertue of a promise to him, but onely through the providence of God, God out of a general love doth bestow such comforts upon him, it is not from any promise made to him. And indeed seeing the Text saith, *The promises of God are confirmed in Christ*; unlesse a man be in Christ, there is no promise can be effectual to him. Oh the sad condition of all ungodly men! For if thou hast no promise, what hope canst thou have? Are not the Devils therefore eternally wretched, because they have no promise? Hope in this is compared to an *Anchor*, Heb. 6. 19. Now what shipwrack must that ship needs endure, which under waves and tempests hath no Anchor for a defence?

4. Gods promises to us suppose faith in us.

Fourthly, *Gods promise for the accomplishing of it, doth suppose faith on our part; for the promise on Gods part, and faith on our part, are correlates.* We cannot put forth faith for any mercy, where we have not Gods promise; neither is Gods promise accomplished to any but the believer. Thus the Apostle, *Rom. 4. 16.* saith, *The promise is of faith, that it might be not only by grace, but also made sure to such who do believe.* So that it is with a godly man according to his faith. Christ saith to thee, *Be thou justified according to thy faith*; receive pardon and comfort according to thy faith. If thou complaineest God hath made great and precious promises, but I cannot taste of this honey, I perish notwithstanding this fullnesse: Then remember it is not, because there is not enough in the promise, but thy faith is weak, thy vessel is narrow to receive: As if the woman should have refused to borrow vessels, when the Prophet multiplied her oyle. For the oyl did not cease, till her vessels ceased: So neither will Gods promise cease working, till thy faith cease to operate. Indeed in Gods comminations and threatnings they are fulfilled, whether man will or no: Let him believe, or not believe, God will throw the ungodly into Hell; but in the promises it is otherwise; then they do good to us, when by faith we imbrace them. So that by this we see how dangerous and noxious it is, not to put forth faith; it both dishonours God, and depriveth us of all good: it dishonours God, as if he were not true, as if it were not impossible for him to lie, as if he were no more than a man. Therefore *Abraham* is said, *To give glory unto God by believing*, *Rom. 4. 20.* because he did not regard the dead womb, or the improbability in second causes, but rested upon the promise alone. If it be so hainous a matter to accuse man of a lie, who yet is by nature a *liar*, as the Scripture pronounceth of him, how unsufferable is it to attribute it unto God. And then it is a very destructive sinne; for it evacuateth all promises as to us; it maketh thy condition as hopelesse, as if never any promises had been made: This is to cut the Conduit-pipes of all comfort and consolation. This is with the *Philistims*, as it were to throw earth into all the Wells of water. Therefore above all things look to thy faith, for it maketh God no God, Christ no Christ, promises no promises, as to thee.

5. God hath sealed his promises to us.

Fifthly, *That our faith may be the more confirmed, he is not onely pleased to make promises to his people, but also to give signes for the confirmation thereof.* Therefore Sacraments are confirming signes of Gods promise, they are *visible promises*: so that our unbelief will still be the greater sinne; if neither the promises nor the seals visibly annexed thereunto, shall not establish us against all doubting and uncertainty. It is true, the Sacraments cannot make Gods word surer in it self, but they do in respect of us, God graciously condescending to our humane weaknesse: By which mercifull provision of God, that his people might live a life of faith in his promise, we may gather as the necessity of faith, so also the great pronenesse that is in us



us to unbelieve, that we rather live by sense, than by faith. Hence it is that when we have outward supports and comforts, our hearts are kept up; but when all these leave us, are taken away, then like *Peter* upon the water, we are afraid, and should even sinke, did not the Lord support us.

Sixthly, *It is therefore a very great skill to make use of the promises of God by faith.* It is the Gospel-wisdom, a mystery it is, that even the Disciples of Christ are a long while ere they can learne it. For though God doth promise to doe such and such wondrous things, yet he suffereth so many crosse providences to fall out, that we would think God had wholly forgot his promise. Hence the Church complaineth, *Doth his promises fail for ever?* Yea the Apostle *Peter* doth speak of some prophane scoffers, that asked, *Where was the promise of his coming?* 2 Pet. 3. 4. because they saw all things continue as they did, therefore they thought Gods promise was in vain. It behoveth the people of God therefore to acquaint themselves with Gods Riddles, to plough with the Scriptures Heifer: for their unskillfullnesse herein, is that which maketh them so full of dejections, which doth so often perplex them, not knowing what to think or say: yea they are apt to question the truth and righteousness of God: but take heed of this, it is a very great sinne, when God giveth thee a sufficient testimony of his grace and favour to thee, by his promises and seals thereof, still to question and doubt, whether God will doe it or no. This is grievously to tempt God, as the people of *Israel* did, *Exod. 17. 7.* who though they had so many miraculous discoveries of Gods presence with them, yet still they ask, *Is the Lord amongst us, or not?* Oh take heed of saying, *Is the Lord mine?* Will he do good to me? When he hath given proof enough, both by his promises, and seals, of his favour. Oh satisfie thy soul with this! Lord, I have thy promise, before thou promisedst, thou wast free whether thou wouldst do it or no; but since thy mouth hath promised it, how can thy hand but fulfill it? Let thy temptations, thy straits be never so great, yet know the promise of God cannot be straitned. Though thy friends die, though thy goods are lost, yet Gods promise cannot die, neither can that perish. And if thou sayest, Oh but I am unworthy, I am a poor wretch! What then? Say, Lord though I am unworthy to be helped, yet thy promise is worthy to be made good! O Lord, though I have sinned, yet thy promise hath not sinned! But more of this in the next particular, which is the Predicate in the Proposition.

6. 'Tis great skill to make use of promises

SERM.





## SERM. CXXVI.

*How all the Promises are confirmed in Christ.*

2 COR. 1.20.

*For all the promises of God, in him are Yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.*

**H**AVING dispatched the Subject in this Proposition, we proceed to the Predicate, that which is affirmed of the *promises of God*; and that is their stability and immutability; they are *Yea and Amen*: with the meritorious or fundamental cause, [*In him*] that is, *Christ*. Some indeed take the latter clause, *viz. in him* they are *Amen*, with relation to the final cause, and so explain it of our duty, that we are to set our *Amen* to the truth of Gods promises.

In the former expression is denoted the certainty and firmnesse of the promises, when they are said to be *Yea*.

In the latter our duty, and what obligation lieth upon us in reference to them, *viz. that we should set to our seal of Amen*, giving our assent of confirmation; and this will greatly redound to Gods glory. Calvin goeth in this latter explication, as being most congruous and adapted to the Apostles meaning: Though he confesseth he will not be contentious, if the common path be trodden in. I shall therefore follow our Translators, which seem to go the genuine way. It is affirmed of Gods promises, that they are *Yea*; by that you heard the Apostle meaneth a *constant affirmation*, and *verity*. Hath God promised any good thing to an humbled soule? This will alwayes be *Yea*; God will alwayes grant it, he will say *Yea, yea*. How comfortable would this meditation be to a gracious heart? How often doth thy trembling, desponding soule go into his presence, fearing that God will give a *Nay* to thee? Because thou art apt to change, and to be mutable, therefore thou fearest God will be so also.

Now the Apostle for the greater certainty sake, doth double his expression to the same sense, [*In him they are Amen, In him they are Yea,*] *In him they are Amen.*] The one is a *Greek* word, the other *Hebrew*: and it is to shew, that both to *Jew* and *Greeke* the promises are confirmed in Christ. For whereas the *Jewes* perswasion was, That the *Messias* should come onely to their Nation; therefore the Apostles dared not to preach Christ to the *Gentiles*, till Peter was confirmed by a vision from above. By Christ, this partition wall is broken down: so that the promises of grace are made to the believing *Gentile*, as well as the believing *Jew*. To the *Gentile* the promises are *Yea*: to the *Jewes* they are *Amen*. To this purpose the Apostle also, *Galat. 4. 6.* speaking of the Spirit of Adoption, which is sent into the hearts of believers, addeth, *That thereby we are enabled to call*



call him *Abba, Father*. *Father* for the *Gentile*, *Abba* for the *Jew*. So that whereas the believing *Gentile* might have doubted, whether he being as a dog, the childrens bread should belong to him: Hereby is certified, that Christ is a Christ to them, the promises are promises to them as well as to the *Jewes*. The word *Amen* is used sometimes nominally. Thus Christ is called the *Amen*, Revel. 3. 14. *These things saith the Amen*; well then may the promises be *Amen* in Christ; seeing Christ is the *Amen*. Sometimes it is used adverbially, and so is to be understood by way of desire and wish, *Let it be so*; or by way of attestation and confirmation, *It is so*. Hence translated by the Interpreters of the Old Testament, sometimes *אמן*, and sometimes *אמין*. When it beginneth a speech, it is a note of affirmation, as often our Saviour, *Amen, Amen, I say unto you*, &c. When it concludeth, then it is a note of confirmation; and in this sense Calvin and others take it, as our duty by way of consent, confirming the promise, as you heard. The *Rabbines* speak of a two-fold *Amen*, a perfect *Amen*, and an imperfect. The imperfect *Amen*, they make three-fold, *Amen Pupillum*, when one saith *Amen* to the prayer he doth not understand. *Amen subreptitium*, when a man saith it before the end of a prayer. *Amen sectile*, when a man saith *Amen*, but distracted and divided in his thoughts, so that he doth not attend to what he saith *Amen*. And certainly this latter *Amen*, most are guilty of that use to say it. The words being thus explained, the Observation is,

*That in Christ alone all the promises of God are confirmed, and made good.*

In Christ alone are all the promises of God confirmed and made good.

Thus you have also at another time asserted by the Apostle, Rom. 15. 8. *I say that Jesus Christ was a Minister of circumcision for the truth of God, to confirme the promises made unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorifie God for his mercy.* This is a notable place, which the Apostle affirmeth with much vehemency. *This I say* (and the matter is this) *that by Christ all promises both to Jewes and Gentiles are confirmed.* The *Jewes* they were apt to thinke, that by their own workes the promises were confirmed. Yea, how secretly doth this Pharisaical sinne lodge in our breasts, as if the promises were performed not for Christs sake, but our own sake? This is that Ivy-sinne, which adhering so close to our natures, doth secretly consume and devour all. Insomuch that we may say, the whole Gospel consisteth in this truth, and that the whole treasure of Christian consolation is bound up in this.

And therefore that we may both understand, and be affected with it, consider these things:

First, *By the promises of God we mean the promises of grace onely.* There is no grace to a sinner, but through Christ; and hereby we exclude the promises by workes, or the Covenant of workes, of which we spake the last day. Although the Law doth continue still in its force to us Christians; as it is a Rule to order our conversation by, yet as it is a Covenant, so it is abolished: No man being able to plead eternal life, by a *Doe this* but by *believing*; and therefore the Law as a Covenant, is so farre from, being established or made good by Christ, that it is directly opposite to him. So that the Law and the promise are made by the Apostle two contra-distinct wayes of justification: He that seeketh to be justified by the Law, falleth off from Christ, and maketh him to be of none effect. Thus the promise by *workes* is contrary to the promise of *grace* through Christ; yet there have been some alwayes in the Church, who have endeavoured to

1. By the promises of God here are meant onely the promises of grace.

joyne



joyn those things which God hath put so farre asunder, and that is the Law and the Gospel, the promise of works, and the promise of grace; by which confusion they have made void the grace of God. For if Gods promise be not solely of the grace of God, and every way of grace, then it is not at all of grace, *If of workes, then not of grace.* It is the Apostles intallible argument, *Rom. 11. 6.* It cannot be of grace and workes also. *Luther (Comment. in Genes.)* maketh this properly *Simony*, when we would have Heaven for the workes we doe; and thereupon saith, *Omnis homo naturaliter est Simoniacus.* Now how necessary is this truth to be known by every humbled and afflicted sinner? How difficultly is he brought to the promise of grace, as if it were the forbidden fruit, that he might not taste of it? This was the precious gold that the first Reformers with much labour digged out of the mines of the Scripture: it was the oyl they poured into wounded hearts. In what a wilderness doth the child of God wander, till he hath this pillar of fire to guide him? Peace and joy cannot be obtained, till he come to this promise of grace in Christ. How slavish, how servile is he, till he know that this onely is the way of justification, this onely is the way of pardon and acceptance with God? And Gods children, especially while in the pangs of conversion, or at any time under deseriions and black fears about their estate, are to flie unto this, as a City of Refuge. Many an heavy temptation, many an heart-breaking doubt would be overcome, wert thou once perswaded, that in the matter of justification, thou must know nothing, live upon nothing, but the gracious promise of God in Christ.

2. Promises  
are fulfilled  
either in Christ  
or by him.

Secondly, We are to distinguish of promises: they are either fulfilled in him, or fulfilled by him. For according to this division, so some doe differently understand the Text. For there are Interpreters that make this the meaning, *All the promises, viz. which have of old beene fore-told by the Prophets, they were all Yea and Amen in him*, that is, *They were all fulfilled in him*; and in this sense all the promises are true, *in him, ut subjecto.* But then others, they say, not onely the promises of the Old Testament, but of the New also, they are sure *in him*, because through his worth and dignity they are accomplished; and thus the promises of God are *Yea in him, ut fundamento, & causâ meritoria.* But we are not to oppose these interpretations. For if we take the promises of both kinds, they may well be applied to the Text: Yea the latter do necessarily suppose the former: The former is to support our assenting faith; the other, our fiducial faith. For the first, we read of many promises in the Old Testament, concerning a *Messias* to come: and these were all accomplished in that person, *Jesus of Nazareth.* The first promise that was made concerning him, is *Genes. 3. 15.* where he is promised, *As the seed of the woman that should destroy the seed of the Serpent.* Afterwards he is more particularly promised, *As the seed of Abraham in whom all Nations should be blessed*; which the Apostle doth industriously apply to Christ, and to Christ onely, *Galat. 3. 16.* So that we may say, the promise made to *Adam*, the promise made to *Abraham*, are fulfilled in Christ, they are *Yea and Amen in him.* Thus also the promise of a *Shiloh*, the promise of a great Prophet whom God would raise up, the promise of a King, who should sit upon Davids throne, and of his Kingdom there should be no end. The promise of a *Messias* by the Prophet Daniel, were all yea in Christ. When he came into the world, we might truly say, *Behold the seed of the woman, behold Abrahams seed, behold Davids King, Jacobs Shiloh, Daniels Messias.* Yea the Prophet *Isaiab*, who is justly called the fifth Evangelist, because he doth as plainly and clearly speak of Christ, as the Evangelists



gelifts doe, All his promises concerning him, especially in Chap. 9. 6. *To us a Childe is borne, to us a Sonne is given, and the Government shall be upon his shoulder.* As also Chap. 7. 14. *Behold a Virgin shall conceive and beare a Sonne, and shall call his Name Immanuel.* But chiefly Chap. 53. where at large his sufferings are fore-told for our sinnes, *That he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, and that by his stripes we are healed.* All these are made evidently *Yea and Amen* in him. And not onely the promises, but all the Levitical administrations, the sacrifices, the *Scap-goat*, the *whole burnt Offering*, the *Paschal Lamb*, these were types of Christ, and were *Yea* in him; which made *John* the Baptist say, *Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sinnes of the world,* John 1. 29. Now the consideration of this serveth greatly to confirme our faith against *Jewes*, who blaspheme the Lord Christ, cavilling that those promises could not be applied to him, and therefore they doe expect another *Messiah*. Neither doth the usefullnesse of this truth stay there, but when it hath perswaded us of the true dogmatical faith, then it further inclineth us to a fiducial recumbency and reposing of our soules upon him, as our *Prophet*, and *King*, as our *Christ*, who is to bring us into reconciliation with God. And this sense of the Text we are to acknowledge; but then the other, which floweth from this, is, *That in Christ all the promises of God to his Church are confirmed, they have their vertue and efficacy from him.* Without Christ there could not have been such promises made, neither without him could they have been accomplished, as may appear in the third particular, which is,

*That the promises being the signes of Gods grace and favour, there could neither have been the existency of promises, or the fullfilling of them without Christ.* And the reason is, because of that infinite holinesse which is in God, whereby he cannot but loath sinners, and his glorious Attribute of Justice, whereby he is carried out to punish every such offender. This Justice of God causeth such a great gulf between us and God, that neither a gracious promise can come to us, or we to it, till by the blood of Christ, this justice be atoned, and a sufficient expiation made by his blood. No wonder then if all Gospel-promises are said to be made *in him*, because the least good thing promised could never be vouchsafed to us without Christs mediation: There could not be remission of sin, there could not be accepting of our persons, there could not be the least drop of any blessing communicated to us, had not Christ as our Surety interposed. Therefore it is not the promise, but Christ in the promise, that the soul is by faith to receive. The *Ens incomplexum*, not *Complexum*, is *Objectum fidei*, saith the learned. The promise or proposition is onely *Objectum quo*; Christ, or the matter promised, is the *Objectum quod*. In all promises then we are still to have our eye upon Christ, as without whom they could not have any efficacy at all. So that as it is with the creatures, they all subsist by his power, *In him we live, and move, and have our being*: And if God should withdraw his arme, they would all fall into nothing. Thus it is with the promises recorded in the Scripture, they all move and act (as it were) *in him*; They all live, and worke in him; were it not for his merit, and his Spirit, they would be but as empty words, or as a tinkling cymball. Therefore

In the fourth place, *The Covenant of Grace*, which is virtually all the promises of God, it is not onely called a *Covenant*, and a *Promise*, but a *Testament* likewise. And that for this end, because it doth necessarily relate to the death of the Testatour: So that Gods promise is not to be conceived, as when one man maketh a promise to another abso-

3. There could have been no promises without Christ.

4. And therefore is the covenant of grace called a testament.



lutely, and without any thing intervening. For here we have God indeed promising from his meer absolute goodnesse and mercy: but then the execution of this cannot be without the blood of Christ: so that all the force of the promise ariseth from the death of Christ. The Apostle therefore argueth the validity of this Covenant from that, which is amongst men, *Galat. 3. 15. A mans testament when it is confirmed, cannot be disannulled or added unto; how much rather then must the testament of Christ be confirmed for ever?* The Apostle doth excellently consider this, *Heb. 9. 15.* For this cause Christ is a *Mediatour of the New Testament*, that by meanes of death,—they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there also must of necessity be the death of the testatour. By which it appeareth, that the promises of God are established upon a sure and unchangeable foundation, even the blood of Christ: and therefore as sure as Christ died, so sure will those promises of God be made effectual to thee. Indeed if Gods promises were *Yea and Amen*, according to thy workes, to thy worth and dignity, woe would be unto thee. Yea, though God doth require faith and repentance, yet the promises are not settled upon these, as a foundation, but on Christ; and therefore it is, that our hopes, our comforts can never be shaken. The promises then of God have *two Pillars* to bear them up, though one be enough: The first is, *The immutability and verity of Gods Nature*; he cannot charge, he cannot lie. The other is, *From the Merit and Efficacy of Christs death*, whereby the things promised are deserved, and that at a dear rate, even Christs blood. Now then can any godly soule, give way to unbeliefe, to sinfull dejections, seeing that God cannot lie, and the blood of Christ cannot but obtaine, God cannot deny himselfe, neither can he deny his onely Sonne? Therefore let the godly soule remember this, Gods promise is not onely a bare promise, but Christs Testament also: Infomuch that all spirituall benefits are the fruit of his death; and shall we thinke that blood will be shed in vain? Shall we give no more to Christs Testament, then we will to a mans? But this Doctrine deserveth further enlarging.





S E R M. CXXVII.

*Of the usefulness and unchangeableness of the Promises of God.*

2 COR. I. 20.

*For all the Promises of God, in him are yea, and in him amen,*

**A**LL the promises of grace, you have heard, are established upon two immovable pillars, Gods unchangeableness, and the blood of Christ. To proceed from this, followeth First, That *Deus absolutus*, as Luther was wont to say, or *Deus in predicamento substantia*, is a consuming fire, and we are nothing but stubble before him: it must be God as in *predicamento relationis*, as he is a God promising mercy unto us in Christ; that is the ground of all our commerce and fellowship with him. We are not to appear before God in confidence of our obedience to his commands, but by faith in his promises: inasmuch that the only foundation we have to build upon in all our approaches unto him, is Gods promise alone in Christ. The godly soul is to look with as much or more chearfulness on that, than *Rahab* could do on the scarlet thread held out, as a commemorative signe to preserve her life: were it not for this promise in Christ, who could, who might, who dare draw nigh to God the Father? So that it is through Christ that the way is opened for us to come unto God. We may see this notably prefigured, as it were in Gods dispensation with the people of *Israel*, *Exo. 33. 2, 3.* for when they had by their sinnes greatly provoked God, the Lord denied his presence to go along with them: *I will not go up with thee, lest I consume thee in the way*: this sheweth, that such was Gods anger against their iniquity that he could not bear it; It's a speech taken from the humour of men, otherwise the anger of the Lord is subject to his own power, only this is spoken to shew what distastefull objects they were to him; But though his anger be thus against them, yet see what he promiseth, *ver. 2. I will send my Angel before thee*: Here God would not go, but his Angel, now this Angel is Christ, as appeareth *Exod. 22. 20, 21, 22.* where he is described as one, in whose power it is to pardon iniquities, with this addition, *for my Name is in him*. Observe then here a sweet Oeconomy or dispensation of Gods dealing with the people of *Israel*, as a President to inform us about all mankind; God would not look upon mankind, neither would he behold, as it were, if he did, he should immediatly destroy them all; but he sends an Angel, he sendeth Christ into the world, and so in and through him he becomes propitious to us: Now how little is this understood by Christians, who do go to the promises upon their own obedience? they think they beleeve, they repent, and in the mean while Christ is not all in all, as if in our graces, in our performances: The promises of God were *yea and Amen*, and not in God himself: It is a long while ere the ministry of the Law hath any efficacy upon mens hearts, ere they



they are sensible of the weight and the heaviness of sinne, ere they go bowed down because of this burden; and when that hath broken them, it is many times longer ere they are directed to an Evangelicall life, ere they can tell how to make use of the proper remedy, which is the promise of God in Christ; for all their disputes and doubts arise from this, as if the fulfilling of the promises were established upon themselves, and not upon Christs blood. Truly if the humbled sinner were well instructed in this principle, it would be like the rising of the Sunne, to dispell all darkness, for either the promises are made good because of thy faith, and of thy repentance, or because of Christs blood and atonement through that; if because of the former, then no wonder thou art no more quieted in thy minde, no wonder thy heart is so full of fears: for how weak is thy faith? how strong and heavy is thy heart? if thou must be justified by their worth, thou art undone. But then if Christ be the surety, if he hath undertaken for thee, and performed for thee what was required by the Law, then thou maist pleade, though not for my sake, yet for Christs sake let thy promise be made good to me.

But the troubled soul will object very plausibly against this, Though Gods promises are made good in Christ, yet there is the duty of faith and repentance required of me, so that if I do not beleve, if I do not repent, there is no promise through Christs blood established, that will do me any good: what? is it your meaning, that though I am a sinner, and while I abide in my sins, I should pleade the promise of God in Christ? Is not this to dash my soul at the *Antinomian* rock? This deserveth a full answer.

Ans. 1. It is hard to sail between the Arminian and Antinomian rock.

And first, *It must be acknowledged, that in this point it is hard to sail between the Scylla and Charybdis of the Arminian error on one hand, and Antinomian on the other side.* For the *Arminians* they indeed make Christ to be the atonement for our sins, but so that we must beleve and repent, all which is true. But then if it be asked, how come we to beleve, and to repent? here they fly, in part at least; to our own free will, for they deny that faith is purchased by Christs death; so that by their doctrine the whole fruit of Christs death standeth suspense and indeterminate, till it be determined by our faith. Christs death is made effectual to us by our beleiving; and this beleiving is not wrought in us by Christs Spirit, nor is it bestowed on us as the fruit of his death, but only we joyning with the grace of God do make the redimibility which was before faith, by faith to be actual redemption. And the *Papist* he erreth more grossly herein, for he addeth further, that our faith and repentance, yea, all holy works are causal conditions, such as are meritorious, and have an inward condignity and proportion to the reward. Thus generally the *Papists*, though some of them deny this merit and causality; But the *Antinomian* falleth into another extremity, for he doth so offer Christ and his promises to a man, as if nothing at all were required on mans part, and therefore tels a sinner that it is his duty while a sinner, and abiding in that state, to receive the promise; yea, one goeth so far \* as to say, that Christ did beleve for us, Christ did repent for us, and therefore that we are not bound to beleve or repent, but only to rest on Christ that he hath done these things for us. Thus you see, here are two extreme opinions, and it is very hard for the soul in its first troubles and pangs to be guided out of this wilderness: how many have been seduced by *Antinomian* errors, under the specious pretence of free grace? and how many again have fallen into *Arminian* and *Popish* principles, thinking that way to assuage their bleeding hearts? but the Scripture truth doth lie between these two; for Christ, and so the promises, are not applicable to sinners as sinners, whether they beleve or not beleve, whether they repent or not repent, but do require indispensably of all grown persons faith and repentance; but yet on the other side, this faith and repentance of ours, have no merit or dignity in them, nor are

\* *Salmasius.*



are they the effect and fruit of our own will and power, but are the gifts of Gods grace, and the consequent of Christs death, so that Christ did not only die for our sins, he did not only dye to confirm the promises to us, but he died also to give us faith and repentance, that by them we might be qualified subjects for such glorious mercies. Hence the Scripture maketh faith and repentance to be the gifts of Gods grace, as well as remission and pardon of sinne. These duties then are necessarily required of us, that the promises may be made good to us, against the *Antinomians*; yet these duties are Gods gift, and the work of his spirit, not the issues of our free-will; against the *Arminians*.

Therefore in the second place, *when a Christian cometh to make use of a promise, he must not oppose Christ and his duties, but compose them together*: he must subordinate his duties to Christ. We complain that the Popish doctrines oppose Christ and duties, even as the Apostle argueth against the *Galathians*, who by works of the Law made Christ of none effect: and we cannot deny but the heart of man is so prone to put confidence in what we do, and although we disclaim the merit of works, yet to have a secret rest of the soul upon them, that it is very difficult to keep within our bounds, but yet we are also to know that every thing in Christianity is very hard to flesh and blood. Any thing graciously done, is exact, and accurately commensurated to the rule of God: whereas such is the instability and unrulinesse of man naturally, that he is apt to run from one extreme to another, and while he seeketh to avoid one, to fall into another: our duty therefore is, to rest upon Christ alone in the promises, as the meritorious and fundamentall cause, yet diligently to pursue after holinesse, as that which qualifyeth the subject for the glorious things promised: God hath required these duties of thee, therefore be thou as faithful and diligent in the performance of them, as if there were no Christ, no Mediatour: And again, be thou as wholly recumbent on Christ, as if thou hadst no faith, no repentance at all; distinguish between the necessary presence of them, and the causality of them. Thus it ought to be the wisdom and skill of Ministers so to preach and exalt Christ, as thereby no duties are to be omitted or neglected: And again so powerfully and exactly to presse duties, that Christ be not in the least manner disrobed of his glory; for although Christ interposeth between the Fathers wrath and us, yet you must not so understand it, as if by our sins we could not provoke Christ; as if through our unbeleef and impenitency, we might not cause him of a lamb to be like a roaring lion: We must not apprehend Christ to have only mercy in him, and all wrath to be in God the Father only: for observe that counsel given to the people of *Israel* concerning this Angel, who was to guide them, which is Christ, *Exod. 23. 21. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not, for my Name is in him*. Though then the promises are established upon Christ, yet take heed of provoking him by impenitency, for even Christ will be a judge against thee because of thy disobedience: Well, let all this be granted, yet still the tender and broken heart will object: I dare not lay hold on the promises, they do not belong to me; I finde so much unworthinesse, so much dulnesse and stupidity, that though others may pleade the promise, yet my heart is so full of fears and confusion, that I dare not do it. What therefore should a Christian, doubting whether the promises do belong to him, do in that darknesse and perplexity which is upon him?

And first, we grant, *That a Christian so exercised, is not to ascend up to those high points of predestination, or the universal redemption by Christs death*. We do not require of thee to ascend up into heaven, as it were, to search into the Book of life, whether thy Name be written there, and then to say, the promise belongs to thee. This absurd and preposterous course some would fasten upon those, who hold the doctrine of Gods absolute election; as if from that

2. A Christian in making use of a promise must not oppose it to Christ, nor Christ to it.

What a Christian ought to do in his doubtings of his interest in the promises.

1. He is not to ascend into the high points of predestination and universal redemption.

it



it did necessarily follow, that no Christian humbled for sin might apply the promises, till they first know whether they be elected or no. And again, those that pleade for *Universal redemption by Christ*, they think, that unlesse that be received, we cannot rationally perswade any humbled sinner to apply a particular promise to himself, that Christ loved him, and gave himself for him; but no afflicted sinner is to run to any of these doctrines, but is out of the sence of his unworthinesse, to go as boldly to Christ in the promise, as if none of those doctrines had ever been disputed by learned men.

2. He should make Gods command and invitation his ground of drawing nigh to a promise.

For in the second place, *We are to make Gods commands and invitations the ground of our drawing nigh to the promise.* If then the Scripture be full of such gracious invitations to all that are hungry and thirsty, to all that are humbled and debased under their unworthinesse, to come and finde rest for their souls; yea, if the Scripture commands such as are poor in spirit, with all holy boldnesse to draw nigh to the throne of grace, then here is their warrant, from this, they are to encourage themselves; so that the truly humbled sinner is only to hearken what the word of God commands. Art thou one who findest thy self undone? Dost thou feel thy self to be a lost man? then know it is Gods will and command to come unto him for pardon: Thou art bound in conscience, if thou wilt not dishonour God, nor damn thy own soul, to eat of this tree of life. Never then perplex thy self about these thoughts, whether the promises of God belong to thee or no; for it's plain, They belong to such who are sick under the sence of sinne, who are burthened under the weight of it; and if the promises belong not to such as thou art, they belong to none in the world: and withall set this home upon thy soul, that the longer thou keepest off from the promise, the worse it is with thee; the work of faith will be the more difficult; the longer thou sufferest this wound to fester, the more difficultly will it be cured: The longer thou wandrest in this wilderness, the more hard it will be at last to enter into *Canaan*: the longer the water is muddied, the harder will it be to see the face. For when all is done, and thou hast disputed thy self out of breath, thou must come to this at last, even to lay hold upon the promise by particular application, Shall *Esther* resolve to go into the Kings presence, though no Scepter of Invitation were held out, saying, *If I perish, I perish*? how inexcusable then wilt thou be if thou drawest back, when the Scepter is held out? No wonder if *Adam* did run from God, endeavouring to hide himself from his presence upon his transgression; for as yet he had received no promise from God. But how wilt thou pleade for thy self, when the promise is indefinitely propounded to *every one that findeth the need thereof*? This is certain, it is inevitable ruine to run from the promise; where wilt thou help thy self, if thou flyest from it? There is no other way, but this Ark to escape drowning: Therefore remember, it is not disputing, but resting of thy soul on Christ, that will at last quiet thy spirit.

The promises being to be indured upon will never be altered or changed.

In the next place, in that all the promises of God are thus *Amen in Christ*; it followeth, *That they will never be altered and changed*; that they are more immovable than the Laws of *Medes and Persians*: so that although *David* and others of Gods Children, have sometimes sadly complained, *Hath the Lord forgot for ever*? yet this was from their imbecillity, attending more to the dead womb of second causes than to Gods truth. For God can no more break his promise, than he can cease to be God; and truly herein the heart of a godly man should greatly rejoyce. The promises depend not upon thy strength, upon thy perseverance, upon thy good use of the opportunities enjoyed by thee, but upon Christ alone. How often hast thou, as much as lieth in thee, made the promises of none effect to thee? but the promises keep thee, and not thou the promises, God cannot break his promise. Oh pray to God for an heart that is *yea and Amen*, as well as the promises: say, O Lord, I would gladly have faith as firm



firm as the promises ; I desire my soul may be *Yea and Amen* as well as they are. Oh how full is the Scripture of sweet and comfortable promises ? But we are dejected and desolate, not at all attending to them ; so that it is with us, as *Pythagoras* fancied about the heavens, viz. that they made most admirable musick in their motion, but our ears through continuall use are stupified, and hear them not. To be sure, the Scripture vouchsafeth excellent musick and ravishing joy to a gracious heart, but that many times attendeth not to it. But you may say, If this be so, that God breaketh not his promise, how shall we understand that place, *Num. 14. 34*? where God threatning the people of *Israel* for their murmuring against them, and that their carcases should fall in the wilderness; then saith God, *ye shall know my breach of promise*, or as in the margin, *my altering of my purpose*. Here it should seem God may break his promise: to this it may be answered, if we follow this Translation, that God speaketh of that particular promise about their entring into the land of *Canaan*, which was conditionall, if they did not rebell against him ; and so they not fullfilling the condition, God is there said to break his promise. But others render the Hebrew word otherwise, as some translate it, *ultionem meam*, my revenge: The Hebrew word *Tenuathi*, cometh of *Noah* to break; and as it is applyed to words and promises, so also to other things; and therefore the most genuine translation is *abruptio-nem meam*, you shall know my breaking, that is as some, that disobedience whereby you have broken your selves from me; or else, which is most probable, that breaking which I have made upon you, because of your sins; you shall know I have divided my self from you for your iniquities; and this I conceive most genuine.

The Use is of Instruction: would we ever have the promises of God fullfilled to us, then the way is to get an interest in Christ; the promises are fullfilled in him, and therefore without Christ, without the promises. He is the heir, and therefore contrary to those in the Parable; Let us not kill him, but obey him, and receive him for our Lord, and then the inheritance will be ours. Canst thou upon good grounds say, Christ is mine? then thou maist also say, all the promises are mine: but know Christ cannot be thine upon any other terms than by forsaking all thy sins, though never so pleasant and profitable: Christ cannot be thine, unlesse you leave every thing else for him. This is the pearl that we must sell all to make ours; and truly no tongue is able to expresse, or heart to conceive the desperate condition of those, to whom no promise of grace doth belong: they are herein like the damned in hell. It is true, in your extremities, in your terrours, you will call for mercy, cry out for pardon; but where is the Christ, in whose name this is to be obtained? Certainly if Christ be yours, the spirit of Christ also, subduing your lusts and sins for you.





## S E R M. CXXVIII.

*The Promises give glory to God both as they are made by him, and beleevved by us.*

2 COR. I. 20.

*And in him amen, unto the glory of God by us.*

**W**E are now arrived at the finall cause or end of *Gods promises*, and their confirmation in Christ, which is said to be *Gods glory*, and that *by us*. The Ministers of the Gospel are the instruments who do offer these promises, and so God is glorified by their ministerial labours. Some copies indeed reade *our glory* *ἡμῶν* for *δι' ἡμῶν*, expounding it in this sence, that it is the glory of the Ministers of the Gospel to proclaim the year of *Jubilee*, the acceptable time of Gods promises; but that is not so probable. Some also, as we have formerly hinted, reade it thus; and therefore in him is *Amen, to the glory of God*. Thus the Vulgar Latine, and one Manuscript Greek copy, which *Calvin* doth commend, calling that connexion we have, *frigida, a frigid and cold one*; whereas this doth notably discover the duty of all beleevvers, that they are to set to their *Amen* as a Seal to Gods Promises: and certainly it is a blessed thing for the people of God to be nourished up in the Evangelicall *Amen*. We do with more ease use the word *Amen* *opratively*, *Let it be so*, then *confirmatively*, *So it is*. For if we did give our *Amen* in this latter sence to the promises, our hearts would have full quietnesse and serenity after our prayers: when we had cast our burthen upon the Lord, then we should no more disquiet our selves with doubting thoughts, whether the Lord will fullfill his promises or no. So that this *Amen* would exclude all *ergo's*, all arguings and doubtful disputations we are apt to molest our selves with. Now although we shall not follow those copies that reade it so, yet that sence must necessarily be included; for then are promises to Gods glory, when they are beleevved and received by us. Let us then seriously consider the end of Gods promises, why hath he taken such a full and sure way for beleevvers? The Text telleth us, it is *for the glory of God*; we would think the promises had this rather for their end, to bring salvation to us; and so indeed that is a subordinate end, but the Apostle he instanceth in the principall and chiefeſt end of all, which is Gods glory. And therefore *Chrysostome* doth well observe upon this Text, that this is a sure argument to prevail with God in our Petitions, for the accomplishment of Gods promises; for though he might neglect our salvation, yet he will not his own glory, saith he: though thy happinesse be no argument, yet his own honour will be a motive to prevail: so that the words then afford this Observation.

That



That the promises of God are made on his part, and are to be beleaved on our part to the glory of God.

The promises of God are made and are to be beleaved to his glory.

When we beleave Promises, we do not only advantage our selves, but we also glorifie God: This is not sufficiently thought of, for we are apt to look upon faith in a Promise as that which is for our comfort, our profit only, and do not attend that. hereby also we do exceedingly glorifie God. Hence *Abraham* is said, *Rom. 4.20.* to be strong in faith, giving glory unto God: That the usefulness of this doctrine may appear, we will consider the Promises, first on Gods part who promiseth them, and shew how this maketh to the great glory of God, and then on the beleevers part, while he giveth his *Amen* to them.

And for the first, Gods glory is exceedingly manifested in promises, by these particularly.

Wherein the glory of God is manifested in his promises.

First, Hereby his bounty and goodnesse is made known. The Lord, as you heard; formerly, was infinitely sufficient in his own self: Nothing can adde to the blessednesse of God, no more than a feather can to the weight of a mountain. Had God created no world, or creatures therein, he had been altogether happy in himself when he made the creatures: It was not for that end that *Eve* was to *Adam*, to be a meet help to him; No, it was his plentifull goodnesse, for *bonum quomelius, eo magis diffusivum*. God is said indeed to make all things for himself, he is the end of all: but as *Lessius the Jesuite* expresseth it, he is not *finis indigentie*, but *assimilationis*; not an end of indigency, as if he wanted any thing by us, but an end of *assimilation* and perfection, whereby he would reduce the rationall creatures to his own likenesse: we may then with enlarged hearts admire the goodnesse of God in all his promises: Hath the Lord promised to be gracious, to pardon sin, to sanctifie and subdue corruptions, give glory to God in all these things: Be like a *David*, a sweet singer of the praises of God, thou maist reade in every promise the glorious attribute of Gods goodnesse and bounty.

1. Hereby his goodnesse is known.

Secondly, As we may see the glory of his goodnesse in promises, so also the glory of his love: We may there reade how great his affections are to us, he layeth aside as it were his absolute Majesty, his terrible greatnesse, and condescendeth to deal with us in a way of promise; he giveth us leave by this to have confident and familiar converse with him: so that as it was the unspeakable love of God to become man for our sakes, thus also it is to become in promise to us: so that whereas the Majesty of God might affright us, his commands and threatnings might amaze us. Now his promises they give us encouragement, and we are with *Moses* admitted as it were to speak to God *face to face*, as one familiar friend to another; he giveth us the key when he maketh a promise, to come into his chamber of presence when we will, or to go in his wine-cellar for all spirituall refreshments: when you come with a promise, you have a *mandamus* as it were for every door to open to you, and to receive you in: These promises of God, like *Peters* Angel, doth break up all the strong bars of any prison we are in; any difficulty we are afflicted with: As *Dalilah* gathered *Sampson* loved her, when he would manifest where his strength was, so may we assure our selves of Gods love to us, by revealing his promises; oh if you bring the promises, you binde the hands as it were of the Almighty, he can do nothing against his promises: when therefore any thoughts of Gods Majesty, of Gods purity and holinesse, may affright thee, run to his promise; and as the people of *Israel* when amazed, under the terrible lightnings and thundrings at Gods presence, in giving the Law, cried out, *Let not God speak*

2. His love.

H h h h

any



any more to us but Moses: so do thou: let not thy Majesty speak, thy Justice speak, thy Holinesse speak, but thy Promise, let that speak, and we will hear.

3. The free-  
nesse of his  
grace.

Lastly, *The freeness of Gods grace* is made very glorious and resplendent in the promises of grace: *Free-grace* is more than love or goodnesse and bounty. for *Adam* while in the state of integrity had those, but *free-grace* is only where a miserable and hopelesse sinner is: Now to such an one belong only curses and threatnings: when therefore in stead of a threatening like a roaring lion to devour thee, thou meetest with a gracious promise to embrace thee, this must needs rejoyce thy heart: Go to the spring head of every promise, and thou wilt finde it to be alone *free-grace*. The Scripture useth these Arguments as equivalent, to have a thing by grace, to have it by a promise, and to have it by faith, for grace is the originall and fountain: Promises are on Gods part the active and communicative means, faith on our part is the receptive and applicative; so that when we enjoy any mercy by Gods promise, thereby is excluded all works and all boasting, and thus God is altogether exalted and man debased.

Again, if we come to the second particular, there we shall see how that our *Amen*, subscribed to the promises, or our firm beleeving in them, doth give glory to God: and this is the more to be pressed, because we are apt to have low thoughts of faith; as we see in Popery, where Charity is far preferred before it, and withall, to beleeve is accounted an easie thing: Thus also the Papists charge us, as if we made the way to heaven a broad way, because we say, they must beleeve, that is the soul and life of all. And further, it is good to presse this, because the people of God look upon *faith* (as was hinted before) only as their ease, not as bringing any glory to God: Hence, though they never doubt whether they should repent of sinne, or love God, yet they do very much doubt about their duty of beleeving. Now all this preposterousnesse ariseth from the want of consideration in this particular, that *Faith giveth glory to God* as well as procureth mercies to our selves, yea, to beleeve in the promise is the great and signall eminent way of *giving glory to God*.

How faith in  
Gods promi-  
ses gives glory  
to him?

1 Hereby we  
acknowledge  
our depen-  
dence upon  
him.

First, because by beleeving in Gods promises, *we thereby proclaim our dependance upon him in all things*, that we live both spiritually and corporally upon him only; so that faith in this consideration is the great duty of the first commandment, That requireth us we should have no other Gods besides him: Thus faith doth, it taketh off from all supports of sense of second causes, of all humane advancements, and setteth us upon the promise of God alone: Now must not this needs *give glory to God*, when God alone is set up, no creature, no other help is looked upon; This is that which maketh faith in the promises so difficult, because it is so hard to be weaned from the breasts of the creature: we know not how to swimme without these bladders; Though we have ten thousand promises to support us, yet one crosse providence doth more to unsettle us, then all these promises to confirm and quiet us; Some have observed, that all the letters in the Name *Jehovah*, are *literae quiescentes*, teaching us thereby to rest our souls alone upon him, it may be that is too curious, howsoever faith may be called the *acquiescent* or *quietative grace*; therefore to beleeve in the promises is to *give glory to God*.

2 Hereby we  
manifest him  
to be the truth  
it self.

Secondly, By beleeving in the promises we glorifie God, because *hereby we manifest him to be truth it self*, the supream and infallible truth, Therefore the Scripture maketh the contrary to this a very hainous sinne, highly dishonouring God, as when it is said, *John 3. 33. He that receiveth the testimony of Christ* (which is by faith) *hath set to his seal, that God is true:* then



Then on the contrary, he that doth not receive it, he setteth to his seal, that God is a lyar: Oh execrable blasphemy, so much unbelief is so much giving the lye to God; and if this be so hainous a sinne, then beleeving doth God as much honour. And truly it must be unpardonable, if we who do upon a mans promise rest our selves contented, and never doubt of the performance; especially when a just and honest man; that we should not much rather rely upon God, of whom the Scripture saith, *It is impossible he should lye.*

Thirdly, Herein doth beleeving in Gods promise so exceedingly glorifie God, *because it exalteth that Evangelicall way of our justification and salvation, which God above all things purposed for his own glory.* The works of Creation are for the demonstration of Gods glory: *Whether we eat or drink, we are to do all for the glory of God.* But the way of mans salvation is in a more signall and eminent manner ordered for Gods glory. This is the mystery that hath astonished all the world; This is that glorious truth which the Angels desire to search into more and more; Now by faith this glory of God is published and acknowledged. Take the despairing sinner, look upon the damned in hell, do they give God the glory of his grace, and of his wisdom and mercy? Do they with cordiall ravishments speak of the unsearchable riches of Gods grace in Christ? No, they cannot do it; therefore the Beleever only is he who giveth God the glory due to him for all Gospel-ways, and all Evangelicall Priviledges. Therefore hath God exalted Faith above all its fellow-graces, because that above all graces doth give God the glory due to him. Indeed in the state of Integrity, their love of God had the preheminance, as it shall also have in Heaven; but in the state of grace, there Faith hath the Excellency: God hath taken off the royal Crown from that *Vasthi*, and put it upon this *Esther*, this despicable grace, as it were, and which hath no Pomp at all in it; Only as it is said of Christ, *who being poor made many rich*; So this poor grace doth not onely enrich us, but every way advanceth the Glory of God; In-somuch that from the unbeleever God hath no more glory than if he had never sent his Sonne into the world; No more glory than if there were no promise, no grace, no mercy and pardon: Let not then the People of God have low thoughts of Faith: No, thou dost more in beleeving, and bringest more glory to God thereby, than thou couldest do by all thy other obedience. Shouldest thou mortifie sinne to thy desire? Shouldest thou dye a Martyr for the Cause of God? thou wouldest not so glorifie God as thou dost by beleeving. I know this seemeth very Paradoxall to the humbled sinner: I know he is difficultly perswaded, that by trusting in God, he doth thus glorifie God; but if thou understandest the Scripture-way, then thou wilt quickly see, as to beleeve is the most difficult duty, so it is the most consequentia for Gods glory: And indeed what have other Duties admirable in them, that Faith it self in the Promise hath not? in beleeving the understanding is mortified, in beleeving the will is crucified, in beleeving the Heart and Affections are martyred: So that faith maketh a man to be offered up as an whole burnt-offering unto God.

3. Hereby we  
exalt Gods  
way of justifi-  
cation.



Use of Instruction, *That the only way to make a man live a joyfull life in himself, and a glorifying life of God, is by faith in the Promises.* This is that Faith by which a iust man is said to live; so that thy doubts, thy fears, thy unbeleeving thoughts, these bring a dishonour to God, these reproach the Gospel-way: these obscure the honour of Christ. Let then the godly soul take heed how it giveth way unto such temptations; if your own consolation, if the glory of God be dear unto you, then bolt out unbelief. No wonder if the devil that is so great an enemy to the glory of God, doth assault your souls most in this; if he have broken down this part of the wall, what legions of other finnes may not he bring with them. For this reason many Divines say, *Sola infidelitas damnat*, which is not to be understood as if other finnes were not meritorious of damnation, yea, and did actually damn; only that opposeth the Physician, that would heal us, that refuseth the atonement that is made for us.

Secondly, As the Promises are thus to be improved for Gods glory by beleeving, so also attend to another effect, which the Scripture doth inferre from them, and that is *to cleanse our selves*, to be every day perfecting holinesse. For so the Apostle notably exhorts us, 2 Cor. 7.1. *Having these Promises, let us cleanse our selves from all filthinesse of flesh and spirit*: Promises are no waies incentives to sinne, or encouragements to evil works: No, but a strong antidote against them. Neither is faith in them a light superficial assent, swimming upon the heart as a fowl in the water, said Luther: but as water calesied doth no more manifest its own coldnesse, but the heat of the water, so doth faith fermentate and leaven the whole soul of a man, that humane things do not so much appear as divine things in him: As the Apostle expresseth the energy of it, when he said, *I no longer live, but Christ in me; and that life is by faith in the Son of God*, Gal. 2.20. Thou then that sayest, all thy trust is in the Promises, thou hopest in them for mercy and pardon: Are they cleansing Promises, purifying Promises? Do they perfect holinesse every day in thee through the fear of God?



SERM. CXXIX.

Our Settlement and establishment in the  
faith of the Promises is the gracious work  
of God alone.

2 COR. I. 21.

Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed  
us, is God.

**T**He Apostle having formerly spoken of his constancy and unchangeableness  
in the preaching of the Gospel, lest this should be attributed to his own  
power, he informeth them, who is the fountain of this strength, even  
God himself: For the Apostle doth upon all occasions delight to exalt grace,  
having experimentally found the mighty work of it upon his own soul. Or we  
may make the coherence this, The Apostle in the verse preceding spake of the  
certainty of Gods Promises in themselves; they were in themselves *Yea and  
Amen*; which is called, *certitudo objecti*, though some learned men think,  
that it is not a proper expression. Now in this Verse he cometh to the *certitudo  
subjecti*, or to show whence it is that the children of God have this assured  
perswasion in their own hearts, that they are true and constant; whence it is  
that we are able to give our *Amen*, as a note of confirmation to them, and  
therefore in the words we may take notice of

The blessed and happy Effect it self, and that is 1. Confirmation, *he which  
stablisheth*.

2. The Subject of this, *us with you*.
3. The Object in whom, *in Christ*.
4. The efficient Cause of this, *is God*.
5. The Illustration of this Establishment, by a threefold Similitude, of  
*anointing, sealing, and giving the earnest*.
6. By whom God doth this, and that is, *by his Spirit*, as it followeth in  
the next verse.

So that in these two Verses is the proper seat of that excellent and precious  
Doctrine, Which is, The assuring and sealing of the Spirit of God that is  
given unto Believers. But I begin with the First.

*It is God that establisheth us*, οὗ ὁ Θεός, though we render it *now*, yet some  
make it causal, *for he that stablisheth us*, &c. and that seemeth more probable.  
The Greek word is βεβαιῶν, of βεβαιῶ, which *Varinus* maketh the same with  
στερῶ and διζυροῖζωμαι, as if the Adjective βεβαιός used by the Apostle, 2 Pet.  
1. 10. is made the same by *Hesychius*, with ἀσάλευτος, that which cannot be  
shaken, or altered; this word is sometimes used of the Doctrine of Christ,  
when that was confirmed, and made sure by miracles, or otherwise, Mark. 16.  
20. Thus an oath is said to be the confirmation of the end of a strife, Heb. 6. 16.  
or else of persons, as here in the Text, and Col. 2. 7. *stablished in the Faith*, which  
being



being uſed paſſively, denoteth that this ſtrength and power we have, cometh from God only. That we of our ſelves are like reeds ſhaken with every winde. It is the grace of God that maketh us pillars in his Church. So that, from the Text we may obſerve,

Our eſtabliſhing in the faith of the promiſe is the gracious work of God alone.

*That our eſtabliſhing and confirming in the faith of the promiſes is alone the gracious work of God.*

Though the Promiſes be never ſo lovely and precious, though never ſo profitable and neceſſary for us, yet we are not able to reſt our ſelves upon them, but by the power of God ſtrengthening us. Our hearts do ſo quake and tremble with the conſideration of our own ſinnes, and unworthineſs, that unleſs the Lord make it ſtedfaſt and immoveable, we are toſſed up and down like the leaves of a tree. That it is God alone who doth thus preſerve and confirm us is plain, by that notable place, 1 Pet. 5. 10. where the Apoſtle prayeth, that *God who had called them would make them perfect, ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, and ſettle them.* The Apoſtle having before ſpoken of reſiſting the Devil, and of expecting afflictions, becauſe fleſh and blood would ſoon ſinck under theſe burdens, he directeth his prayer unto God for them, as knowing, if they had no better preſervers than themſelves, they were utterly undone. Now, although by that multiplication of words, the Apoſtle might ſeem to mean the ſame thing, yet every word hath its peculiar emphasis: for the word *καταſτήσιν*, that is uſed of *nets*, when they are to be mended, as Mark 1. 19. and thereby is implied, That the work of Grace, which we are as it were weaving every day, would quickly be all broken, did not the Grace of God conſtantly reſtore it. It is alſo uſed of *members and parts of the body*, when broken and ſet faſt again by the ſkill of the Chirurgion; and thus it ſuppoſeth how apt every believer is of himſelf to break all his grace into pieces, did not the power of God daily preſerve him. It ſheweth hereby, that there is no ſuch thing as perfection in this life. The other word is *συνεστήσιν*, which ſignifieth *firmly to ſtabliſh a thing*, for it is more then *ἵκαν*, of which it is derived, ſo that it implyeth, God doth as it were *bear us up* by his hand, and *support us*, that we fall not under thoſe temptations we meet with. This denoteth the *firmneſs* of their condition; for although *Moses* hands did wax weary, yet Gods will not. The next word is *ἀποκαταστήσιν*, and that properly ſignifieth *to confirm inwardly, by taking away all that ſirful weakneſs, that is apt to ariſe in us.* The laſt is, *θεμελιώσιν*, which ſignifies, *to ſettle as to lay a foundation*, thus Heb. 1. 10. it is uſed of Gods *laying the foundation of the earth at the beginning*; denoting that the people of God in the work of Grace have as ſure and immoveable a foundation laid, as the very heavens and earth have. For this confirmation doth much relate to our perſeverance, that we ſhall never fall off from that ſtate of favour we are in, but that God who hath begun will alſo finiſh. Hence ſome contend that theſe words are to be read in the future tenſe, *God will eſtabliſh*, and not by way of prayer. To amplify this Doctrine, many things are to be taken notice of, as

1. God may be ſaid to eſtabliſh us either in the grace it ſelf, or in our apprehenſion of it.

First, *God may be ſaid to eſtabliſh us two wayes, either in the thing it ſelf, or elſe in our knowledge and apprehenſion.* Theſe may be ſeparated from each other; God doth and will eſtabliſh his people, to their lives end, and till they come to the end of their race; the greateſt temptations and afflictions ſhall not break their intereſt in the favour of God: but then they may not have certain knowledg, they may be toſſed up and down with divers fears, that they are but hypocrites, that they ſhall never perſevere, that they ſhall not be able to hold out to the end. Therefore the people of God are to pray for and expect this twofold eſtabliſhing at Gods hand; both that God would preſerve the work of grace in their hearts, as alſo aſſure them hereof,



hereof, and confirm them in a powerfull perſwaſion of it; that is, it is in it ſelf ſure, ſo it may be to them, to which purpoſe that command is, *make your calling and election ſure*; 2 Pet. 1. 10. *ſecūm*, that is not in it ſelf, but to their own ſenſe and apprehenſion, and it is of this latter *eſtabliſhing* the Text principally ſpeaketh, though it neceſſarily preſuppoſeth the other.

2. *This effect which God is ſaid to work, implyeth what miſerable, weak, and impotent creatures we are, as to the work of grace, or any aſſurance by it.* That as the world cannot enlighten it ſelf, if God withdraw the Sun, it is wholly in darkneſs: Thus is it with every man, though made godly. All this ſpiritual building would fall to the ground again; of ſpiritual thou wouldſt become carnal, did not God uphold thee: and then if thou haſt obtained any aſſurance about thy condition, fears and doubts would preſently fill thy heart, if God doth not ſhine into thy ſoul. Thus as the earth without the Heavens would be as it was at firſt, a confuſed Chaos, ſo is the heart of man without the dayly Influence of Gods grace upon it. But this will come in more pertinentely upon the next particular, in the Diviſion of this Text.

3. We are therefore to conſider *wherein lieth this eſtabliſhing work of Gods grace*: and that doth conſiſt in ſome things *antecedently*, and ſomething *formally*, by way of intrinſecal conſtitution. For the Firſt.

Confirmation being properly upon the will, and the affections. Before this can be done, *It is neceſſary that the underſtanding of a man, which is a guide to all the other powers of the ſoul, that it be prepared and formed by God thereunto.* The work of God therefore is, to illuminate and enlighten the minde, that ſo thereby the heart of a man may be more ſettled upon the Promiſes. And for Illumination that doth manifeſt it ſelf in theſe Particulars;

1. God doth *discover unto us our own infirmity and impotency*, that we are not able in the leaſt measure to confirm our ſelves. We experimentally finde, how often purpoſes and reſolutions were upon us to thoſe things that were good, how often like *Sampſon* we did ſuffer our ſelves to be bound by many obligations, and decrees of ſpirit, but (alas) upon every emergent temptation we did immediately break all again. That which *Auſtin* did ſo bitterly complain of in himſelf, *viz. the uncertainty and inſtancy of his deſires*. The ſame may every one finde, while left to his own ſtrength. It is therefore a ſpecial preparatory work of God, for our ſettlement, to make us ſee our own ſelf-emptineſs. When *Peter* had confidence of his own ſpiritual ability, in what a ſad revolt did it end? he that had more than ordinary confidence, fell into more than ordinary fear. So that, it is a great work of God, when he fully informeth us, that we are nothing, and can do nothing. Though we have ten thouſand Promiſes ſet before our eyes, yet we are not able to reach forth the hand, to lay hold upon any of them.

2. Another Object about which we are enlightened preparatorily to our ſettlement, is the *acceptableneſs of the work of Faith*: That it is his will we ſhould depend wholly upon him; that whatſoever burden we feel upon us by our ſinnes, yet it is the way he taketh delight in, that we ſhould wait on him, truſt in him, roll our ſtaggering ſoules as it were upon him: and this is no mean work of God, thus to inform and direct a man. For what is it that maketh the afflicted ſinner for his ſinnes be toſſed up and down with ſuch fears and doubts? is it not becauſe he ſeeeth not that it is his duty to caſt himſelf into the armes of Chriſt: he doth not conſider how ſeverely it's commanded, inſomuch that that very ſin of not believing, of not reſting our ſoules upon the Lord Chriſt would damn us, if there were nothing elſe. How happy then is it! and in what good forwardneſs are they for eſtabliſhment, who begin thus to be enlightened? who are thus perſwaded? Though I cannot believe, yet it is my duty to believe. It is not Gods will that I ſhould exerce my ſelf with theſe tormenting doubts.

I am

2. We are not able of our ſelves to do any thing towards the work of grace

3. Wherein lieth the eſtabliſhing work of Gods grace.  
1. In preparing the underſtanding to it.

How God prepares the underſtanding.  
1. By diſcovering our own infirmity.

2. The acceptableneſs of the work of faith.



I am ſure to be damned if I go not to Chriſt the Saviour, if I take not this way, there is no way for me to take; and thus we have got advantage, when we are come thus far. And that this may be done, all thoſe Texts which do either command faith, or commend faith, are very often in his minde.

3. The evangeli-  
call way of  
Gods vouch-  
ſafing mercy  
to the ſoul.

3. The minde of a man is antecedently wrought upon for eſtabliſhment by illumination, concerning the Evangelical way of grace wherein God doth vouchſafe all ſpiritual mercies to the broken in heart. For the ſpirit of God doth not inable us to cry *Abba* Father, till our underſtandings are opened to know that glorious Goſpel-way Chriſt hath taken for to ſave the humbled ſinners; the ſum whereof is this, That it is in believing, not in working, *Rom. 4.* the Apoſtle argueth againſt all conceits of Juſtification by the works we do; yea, that *Abraham* himſelf, though ſo eminent in hoineſſ, did not obtain remiſſion of finnes hereby, and in other places the *righteouſneſſ of faith*, and the *righteouſneſſ of works* are made immediately oppoſite to one another. It is then a ſpecial mercy of God to have the judgment of a man ſatiſfied in this truth, although the poor humbled ſinner cannot yet reſoſe himſelf in the boſome of a Promiſe, though he doth nothing but ſtagger and reel up and down by fears and temptations; yet this is no ſmall proficiency to arrive at the certain perſwaſion of this Doctrin. For we ſee in the Apoſtles dayes that this very Doctrin was called into queſtion, and is it not ſtill by Papiſts and others arraigned, as teaching men Preſumption and Security? and truly, as the head of a man may invent many plauſible Arguments againſt the truth of it; ſo the heart of a man is naturally proud, and ſelf-righteous, and therefore is hardly brought off from works to faith; for faith ſeemeth not to have that activity for juſtification as love and other graces have, though indeed that be the life and ſoul of all, the *primum vivens*, and *ultimum moriens*. As it is with the roots of trees, they have no ſweetneſſ nor comelineſſ in them, when the fruit thereof hath: Thus when good works are glorious and precious, faith from whence they have their life and being ſeemeth contemptible. But this order the ſpirit of God taketh, before it is a ſealing and a witneſſing ſpirit unto us. It is alſo an enlightening and teaching ſpirit, and that eſpecially in this grand truth, which is the ſum of the Goſpel, viz. that *by faith, and not by works, we become juſtified before God*: and where his Goſpel-light hath not taken place in any afflicted conſcience for ſin, Oh the unſpeakable temptations, oh the woſull dayes and nights that they meet with. When the ſpirit of God hath thus antecedently wrought upon the judgment, then in the next place cometh this chief and ſpecial work of eſtabliſhing and ſetling the heart. And as it is in planting of a tree, firſt the briars and thornes which cumbred the ground before, muſt be removed, and then the tree is planted. Thus alſo it is with God, while ſetling the heart of a man upon the Promiſes; he doth firſt remove that which is prohibent, and hindring of this confirmation, and poſitively inables it to reſt upon Chriſt; even as the ſun doth firſt diſpel the darkneſſ, and then introduce the light.

2. In ſetling  
the and remo-  
ving the impe-  
diments.

The two Impediments to our eſtabliſhment on the Promiſes alone are *Preſumption* on the one hand, and *Deſpair* on the other; for thoſe are the two Generals as it were, under which all the other finnes oppoſite to this way, are comprehended;

1. Preſum-  
ption.

The firſt is *Preſumption*, and that is the damnable eſtate of moſt men, they are ſecure in their own condition, they reſt contented in their own righteouſneſſ and goodneſſ. Now theſe indeed are ſetled but upon a rotten foundation, theſe have no changes, no inſtancies of ſpirit ariſing from the fear that is in them, but are therefore the more dangerous. Such as theſe are the moſt untractable and unteachable, both about the promiſes of God, and their dependance on them; you can no more remove them out of their Preſumption than mountains out of their places, the ſaddeſt ſubject in the world to preach upon,



upon, or to preach unto; for they have door upon door, and bolt upon bolt, that must be opened, ere you can make any way for Christ or the Promises in their soules. All the weapons taken out of Gods word are presently dulled, when they fall upon them, like a bullet in a pack of wool. When we come to such upon their sick beds, we know not how to begin with them, what to say to them; for whatsoever is said, they are confident it is in them; and all this while its nothing but Presumption, and spiritual security of soul.

The other is *Despair*, with all diffidence and distrustfull fears that incline thereunto. This (I confess) is not so common as the other. We have very few that cry out of their sinnes, fearing they are greater then can be forgiven. But some there are that are ready to be swallowed up in this whirlpool. When therefore God doth confirm the heart of man in the Promises, both these sinnes are removed, he is no longer a self-righteous man, a self-full man, he looketh upon himself as wicked, and destitute of all, and yet on the other side doth not despair in God, though he doth in himself; though he hath nothing of his own to stand upon, yet Christ is his rock on whom he is settled. Thus God keepeth his people from being *Cains*, and *Judas*es on one side, and proud, self-righteous Pharisees on the other side.

2. Despair.



## S E R M. CXXX.

### *Of Gods confirmation of us upon his Promises, by his own grace.*

2 COR. I. 21.

*Now he which establisheth you with us in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God.*

**T**He establishment of a Christian upon the Promises of God is only the work of God. Man cannot settle himself, no more than he can make himself. There remaineth for the explication of this truth, to declare, wherein positively this confirmation by God doth consist, and

First, *Hereby God doth strengthen the heart in reference to the Promises, by working in us habits of grace, and some permanent constant Principles, whereby we are carried out easily and delightfully unto them.* The heart of man being originally and habitually corrupt, is contrary both to the commands of God, and the Promises of God, which is greatly to be observed; for the enmity indeed of our hearts against those holy duties which the Law commandeth is often treated on, that is constantly preached upon; but the sinfull enmity that is in our hearts naturally to close with the Promises of God, that is seldome thought upon. It is therefore very necessary to know the backwardness and frowardness of the heart, to embrace Promises, as well as to obey commands: For, whence is it that the heart is humbled for sin? whence is it sensible of the guilt and burthen thereof, that it flyeth from the Promise? whence is it that

Wherein Gods confirmation of us upon the promises consisteth.

1. In working principles of grace.



the Gospel of Grace, and Justification of a sinner is such a Mystery to it? Whence is it that experience in a godly man teacheth him that Faith in the Promises of all works is the most difficult? Is not all this from the contrariety of the heart, though humbled, to Gods way of Promises? This being then laid for a foundation, when God doth sanctifie a man, he doth not only put these Principles into him, whereby he is enabled to obey the commands of God, but also whereby he is strengthened to receive the Promises of God. And therefore as we have the Spirit of Sanctification, whereby we are fitted for Holiness, so we need the spirit of Adoption, whereby we are prepared for the Promises of God. Now if you ask what are these habitual Principles wrought in us by God, whereby we entertain the Promises, and apply them to our own selves? I answer, They are these,

## 1. Faith.

The first, which doth immediately and formally work the soul thereunto is Faith. Faith and the Promises are mutually related one to another, They are like the stomach and meat, hence Gal. 3. 22. it is said, *That the Promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.* And Ver. 14. the Gentiles are said to receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. By which it doth appear that the Promise without faith doth us no more good than meat without eating: Therefore to believe is John 6. *to eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood.* This Faith therefore in the Scripture is commended above all other Graces, both in respect of its working, *ad intra*, and *ad extra*: *ad intra*, for by it Christ dwelleth in our hearts, by it we receive the Promises, by it we are justified, by it the heart is purified: and then *ad extra*, by faith we are quickened up to all those holy duties which are required of us. It is faith which *worketh by love*, Gal. 5. 6. and so by patience, by zeal, by repentance. If then thou wouldst have thy soul fixed upon the Promises, pray above all things for this grace of faith. Faith dispelleth fears, doubtings, and all temptations of Satan: therefore we are said to be kept by the power of God, but through faith to salvation, 1 Pet. 1. 5. we are left, as in a safe garrison, so the word signifieth, as some observe. Know then, that if thy faith could alwayes be kept lively, and vigorous in thee, there is nothing could divide between thee and the promise; but as the childe in the wombe is nourished by the navel of the mother, so is thy heart by Faith in the Promises. Hence it is observed, that of the same root in the Hebrew, whence the word Faith cometh, there ariseth also the word signifying a nurse, *וְנָסָה* Numb. 11. 12. *as a nursing father beareth the sucking childe*: as if faith did make a man continually suck at the Promises, as a childe doth at the nurses breasts. This then is the most eminent and principal grace, establishing the heart: As on the contrary, *unbelief* is that which doth unsettle and distract the heart.

## 2. Love.

A Second habitual grace and principle inclining the heart to the Promises, is Love: not that we are justified by love, or that love is a receptive grace, applying the Promises; but only it doth sweeten the heart in reference to God. It putteth us upon good thoughts to God, we look not upon him as a severe judg, taking all opportunities to damn us, but as a gracious and loving father, reconciled to us through the blood of Christ. Therefore not only faith, but love likewise doth expell tormenting fears, and doubts. Thus the Apost'le notably 1 John 4. 18. *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. He that feareth viz. in this slavish manner is not made perfect in love.* We see in this Text what the nature of slavish fear is, and what is the proper effect of a filial love of God. *Slavish fear is tormenting*: doth not every soul exercised therewith, subscribe thereunto? are not servile fears almost like the torments of Hell it self? How intolerable is it to fear God as Cain did, as Judas did, with dreadful apprehensions of Gods wrath against them? Thus fear produceth spiritual horrors as it were in the soul to sing it  
day



day and night; but *love*, the more that is perfected, it casteth out them. How blessed a thing then is it to have the heart filled with the love of God? For as the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 13. *Love suffereth long, and is kind, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.* Thus doth our love affect us towards God: though he exerciseth and chastizeth us, yet we suffer long, and bear it patiently; neither do we entertain hard thoughts of God, as if he were too severe, as if he did punish us more than our sins deserve: it removeth these suspicious thoughts which guilt is apt to raise up in us, as if God were become our enemy, and interpreting every thing in the worst sense; yea this love seeketh not her own, but so that God is honoured, that his great name is magnified and glorified, he mattereth not his own consent and ease. Therefore though God leave him long in desertions, though he be under manifold temptations, yet he saith, *God is good*, and he loveth God, even when God seemeth not to love him; so we may truly say with Solomon, Cant. 8. 6. *Love is as strong as death, the coales thereof are as coales of fire. Many waters cannot quench love, many floods cannot drown it.* Certainly if this be true of humane love, how much more of divine love? If therefore thou wouldst have thy heart settled upon the promises, preserve this love like the fire upon the altar of thy heart daily.

Thirdly, Another habitual principle to confirm the heart upon the promises, is, *Spiritual fortitude and heavenly courage.* Aristotle maketh fortitude a moral virtue, when a man either doth or suffereth great things for vertues sake; but *Christian fortitude* is of a more sublime nature: neither do we speak of it, as enduring great things from man, but from God. For we may see David many times ready to sink under the heavy temptations, he was conflicting with; but then see how his holy generosity recovereth it self, Psal. 42. 9, 11. *I will say unto God my rock, why hast thou forgotten me? &c. And why art thou cast down, O my soul! Why art thou disquieted? hope in God.* Hence David exhorteth all that hope in God, Psal. 31. 24. *To be of good courage, and God shall strengthen their hearts.* Of all temptations none are so grievous to be born, as those which arise from Gods withdrawing of himself, and hiding of his face from us; then we apprehend no promises do belong unto us; then we question very principles, and so are like a ship tossed in the Sea, without Pilot or Anchor. Therefore *spiritual fortitude* to withstand these strong assaults, is above all required. How many have sunk irrecoverably into this pit of destruction? So that unlesse Gods power settle us, unlesse that compose our hearts, we can as well remove mountains, as this sad and fainting spirit of ours. Lay then fast hold on Christ, thou canst not sink in these waters, if his arm doth uphold thee. Thus Timothy is exhorted, *To be strong in the grace that is in Jesus Christ*, 2 Tim. 2. 1. there is his duty to be strong, but how must he come to have this strength, *It is by Jesus Christ*; you would think the exhortation were superfluous: for why must I be strong, if it be the grace of Christ that must enable me? But the exhortation is usefull howsoever; for hereby we are taught our duty, as also to go out of our selves, renouncing our own strength, and laying the matter hold upon Christ himself. To this purpose we have the like exhortation, Ephes. 6. 10. *Finally my brethren be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*: when he had before laid down several precepts, then knowing how impotent and unable we are, he saith, *Be strong in the Lord.* Here you see what we are commanded, but it is the power of his might, that is, his mighty power, that must confirm us; and where this is present, then we wonder how we are carried through such temptations, led through such wildernesses as we have been; we stand and admire to see what red Seas we have gone thorow, and how the waters have yeilded unto us. Thus Paul, *I can doe all things through Christ that strengthens me*, Phil. 4. 13.

3. Heavenly courage and spiritual fortitude.

Fourthly, *Divine hope doth exceedingly conduce to stablsh the soul upon the pre-*

4. Divine hopes.



mises, as you heard, from those admonitions of *David* to his soul, *Hope thou still in God*. Faith is carried out to the truth of God, and hope to the mercy and power of God; and therefore he that hopeth in God, is got into the Ark, while others float in the waters, *Heb. 6. 19.* it is compared to the *Anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth within the vail*. By this we see, that hope doth notably settle the soul. Faith indeed and hope are two sisters and twins, and look so like one another, that we can hardly make the difference; yet *faith* establisheth the soul upon the promises, by apprehending them as present; so that the soul is in as holy a manner secure, as if it were already in Heaven. But *hope* doth settle the soul on Gods promises, as the things promised are future and to come. For seeing between Gods promises, and the accomplishment of them, there happen so many crosse providences in appearance; yea so many difficulties and seeming impossibilities are in the way, we need some divine grace to overcome all these, and that is *hope*, compared excellently to an *Anchor*; for as that doth fasten the ship, which otherwise would be tossed up and down, and in danger of splitting upon every Rock; so the soul of the most godly man is tossed up and down with such sad temptations, that did not this hope bear up the heart, all would fall within us. But this spiritual anchor exceedeth all material ones; for *this is sure and stedfast*. *Sure*, so that no outward violence of storms can break it: and *stedfast*, in respect from within there is nothing without or within that can disanail this. But then whereas other anchors are fastened into the earth, this is in Heaven, in God, and invisible things. A godly mans hope cannot be seen by the bodily eye. Take heed then of weakning this grace of *hope*, it's an excellent corroborater of the soul, staying it up with that glory, which will be revealed hereafter.

## 5. Spiritual joy

Lastly, Another habitual principle, whereby God doth exceedingly establish the heart on the promises, is *Spiritual joy and heavenly consolations*. This is one great reason, say Divines, why Angels and Saints in Heaven are so confirmed in that estate, that nothing can tempt them off from God, they never will be weary of the presence of God; even because they are filled with so much infinite delight and joy, that they cannot desire any better thing than God. Now the godly they have the beginnings of these consolations here upon earth; for by the *spirit of adoption*, they are so filled with joy and delight, that all the world is no more than an husk unto them; they look upon the world as a wilderness, and Heaven as the *Canaan*. So that spiritual consolations, when wrought in the soul, are like a mighty pillar to bear up the heart. Hence the Apostle prayeth, *2 Thes. 2. 17. That God would comfort their hearts, and stablish them*. First, *Comfort*, and then *establish*. How hardly is the heart dejected, and full of despondent thoughts *established*? But *comfort* and *joy* is oil to the wheels. Thus *Nehemiah* spake, *Neh. 8. 10. Be not ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength*. So much sinfull grief as thou lettest in, it is like the letting in of waters at some leak in the ship, it may sink the ship at last. Bless God therefore for any gladnesse of heart, for any consolations of soul through the Spirit of God; these support the soul, these make it rejoyce in the midst of all afflictions. It is true, sometimes the people of God, for wise and holy ends are deprived of them; but when they are vouchsafed, they come like pleasant gales of winde to carry the ship to its Haven.

## 2. By actual motions of his Spirit upon us

In the next place, As God doth positively establish by these habitual principles; so also by the *actual motions of his Spirit upon us*. There is not only habitual grace, but efficacious grace, whereby the Lord worketh in us both to *will* and to *do*. How many times do the principles of grace, like Christ in the ship, lie asleep in us, insomuch that till they be awakened, we are in danger of shipwreck? Therefore when the Apostle exhorteth us, *To work out our salvation with fear and trembling*, *Phil. 2. 13.* he giveth a wonderfull reason; *for it's God that worketh*



worketh in you to will and to do, and that of his good pleasure. So that the confirming power of God lieth chiefly in this, in actuating those habitual principles within us, whereby we depend upon God continually, as the beams of the Sun do upon the Sun. This Doctrine *Pelagians* and *Papists* cannot relish: but certainly if God come not with efficacious actual help, as well as habitual; the instances of the falls of Gods people in all ages, will palpably declare they are undone of themselves.

Having thus illustrated the Doctrine, let us touch some arguments *à posteriori*; whereby it is plain, *That all our establishment is from God.* And

1. It is plain, *In that a godly man findeth such an inequality in the temper of his soul.* Sometimes he is able to withstand strong gusts of temptations; and at another time, he is so weak, that every blow will beat him down. *David* discovereth these hills and valleys in his soul in many *Psalms*. Now if it were a mans own strength, then he would be more constant and uniform. Only by these ebblings and flowings we are taught, that God doth alone support us; if he withdraw his hand, then are we troubled.

2. It is plain, *Because sometimes weak Christians have gone through great temptations, when strong ones have exceedingly failed.* Did not *Peter* an eminent Apostle of Christ fall very dangerously? And yet how many weak women have been inabled to become Martyrs for Christ? Did not *Abraham* called the father of the faithful, shew much sinfull fear when he was in *Abimelechs* country? Alas, if *Samsons* hair be cut, he is no stronger than other men. Oh the wise dispensation of God! Sometimes the strong Christian stumbleth and falleth, when the weak standeth. And why is all this? but as the Apostle teacheth us, to shew, *That the root beareth us, and not we the root*, Rom. 11. 18. Christ keepeth us to him, we do not keep Christ to our selves.

Lastly, That it is God alone who establisheth, as appeareth, *By the prayers of Gods people.* And it's a Rule of *Austins* of old against the *Pelagians*, *It is an absurd thing to pray unto God for that which is in our own power.* If we can establish our selves, why do we pray, that God would not lead us into temptation? Do we not therein proclaim, that our own power, our own strength cannot preserve us in any temptation? Thus *David* prayeth, *Uphold me according to thy Word*, Psa. 119. 116. and *Psal.* 51. 12. *Uphold me with thy free spirit.* The guilt upon his soul, for those grosse sins would have swept him away like a flood, had not God mercifully upheld him: and as the godly have declared this by prayer, so also by their praises and thanksgiving; acknowledging that they could never have gone through such exercises, conflicted with such temptations, had not the Lord supported them. They wonder to see how their hearts were kept up under such dejections. Thus *David*, *Psal.* 63. 8. *My soul followeth hard after thee, thy right hand upholdeth me.* And *Psal.* 145. 14. *The Lord upholdeth those that fall; though they fall, yet he doth not quite take off his hand from them, but raiseth them up again.* Thus you see how true the Text is, *That it is God who establisheth us.*

Arguments that all our establishment is from God.

It appears, 1. From that unevenness that is in the godly themselves.

2. In that weak Christians have gone through great temptations, when strong ones have failed.

3. It appears from the prayers of Gods people.





## S E R M. CXXXI.

*The most eminent for Godlinesse need to be established by God as well as the meanest, which Establishment is in Christ Jesus.*

2 COR. I. 21.

*Now he which establisheth us together with you in Christ, &c.*

**T**He next thing considerable is the *Subject* of this *Establishment*, with the *Object* wherein. The *Subject* is, *Us with you*. In this doth appear the Apostles modesty and humility; Though he had such a plerophory, and did exceed many others, as much as the Cypresse doth the shrubs, yet he attributeth it not to his own strength, or power, but to the grace of God: If God leave him, then this *Samson* is no more than other men. And when he saith, *With you*] this is to be understood indefinitely, not universally. For who can think, that every *Corinthian* was thus established, anointed and sealed? But it is ordinary with the Apostle, when writing to Churches, to speak of them as those that are truly godly, either because many were so, or else because in charity, it was meet for him to think so. Or lastly, because according to their outward calling and profession they declared themselves obliged and bound thereunto. Thus writing to the Church of the *Ephesians*, he speaketh generally, *Grieve not the Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption*, Ephes. 4. 30.

In the next place, you have the *Object*, and that is, *in Christ*, *ἐν Χριστῷ*, *in Christum*. Some render it, as being more emphatical. The sense is, that we are incorporated (as it were) into Christ, and thereby established, for out of Christ, we are as reeds shaken with every wind. From these two particulars, we may observe two Doctrines to be briefly dispatched at this time. The first is,

The strongest Christians need Gods establishing grace as well as the weakest.

*That even the most eminent in godlinesse do need Gods power to stablish them, as the weakest and most infirm.*

Even the *Pauls* that are like gyants, when others are but as dwarfs, are not preserved by their own power. It's Gods right hand that upholdeth them, and if that be removed, they are no more than other men. This is a very necessary truth to be improved for the comfort of those that are weak in their own sense and feeling. Whatsoever encouragements you declare to them, they are ready to put off all with this; It is true, such as *Paul*, such as *Abraham* and *David*, that were starres of the first magnitude, these could do so; God was in a special manner present with them. But we must not argue from these Cedars to such Briars as we are; whereas this Text sheweth, that all are alike as to this dependance



dependance alone upon God, *Us with you*, saith the Apostle; and therefore we have him, *Rom. 8.* and in other places putting himself in the number of other Christians, and arguing for their justification, perseverance and eternal glory, by such arguments as are common to all believers, not from any thing peculiar and extraordinary in himself. So that all believers have the same God, the same Christ to rest their souls upon, though they differ much in their inherent graces. Thus we may see *David* a president herein, *Psal. 32. 6.* when he had declared Gods great goodnesse to him, upon his purpose to confesse his sins, *I said, I will confesse my transgressions unto the Lord, thou forgavest the iniquity of my sinne:* that is spoken by way of aggravation; whatsoever was guilt and damnable in it, though never in so heinous a manner, thou didst pardon it; then mark the inference, *For this shall every one that is godly, pray unto thee for this,* because God did so with *David*: whereas it might be objected, Though God did so with *David*, yet will he with such an unworthy wretch as I am? But *David* answereth you, *For this every godly man shall be encouraged to pray.*

To demonstrate the Doctrine, viz. *That the strongest Christians are alone stablished by the power of God*, consider these particulars:

First, *The examples of the falls of the most godly men that are recorded in Scripture.* By which it is plain, that not they themselves, but the power of God did preserve them, and when that had forsaken them, being left to themselves, they fall into the mire. Thus *David* and *Peter* are sad instances: what weaknesse is upon the best, if the Lord forsake them but for a while? *Peter* was so confident of his immoveablenesse, that he thought, though all others should deny Christ, yet he would stand it out; but how sadly did he fall to the great bitterness of his soul? Thus the godly appear sometimes like Trees in the winter, which though having some life in the root, yet outwardly have no apparent difference from those that are stark dead; and all is, because they have not that establishing grace they use to have. Let not then the strong man in grace, glory in his strength, nor the swift man in the wayes of Heaven, glory in his swiftnesse and feryency, for he is alone supported by the power of God. Yea, which is the more observable, you may see them falling and staggering in those particular graces, wherein they seem to be most corroborated. *Abraham* is the *Father of the faithfull*, and yet he discovered much carnal fear in *Abimelech's* countrey. *Moses* was the meekest man upon the earth, yet in what a forward passion, when he struck the Rock? which so provoked God, that thereby he had onely a sight of *Canaan*, and was not permitted to enter thereinto. *Peter* is noted to have the greatest fervency and zeale of all the Apostles, and yet how surprized with cowardize and sinnefull feare? In these graces of all other, you would not have thought they should stumble and and fall: But behold how it is the arme of the Lord that doth beare us up.

1. It appears from the falls the strongest have had.

Secondly, *This truth is demonstrated from those wondersfull dispensations towards his best servants.* Many are the temptations that they are assaulted with; and all this is, to shew their impotency to them, to discover their infirmities to them, that so they may be humble alwayes in their own eyes. Thus *Abraham* and *Jacob*, they were in constant exercises; no sooner were they delivered from the Lion, but a Bear met them; one wave followed another. And what was the end of all this, but to keep them in continual dependance and waiting upon God? *David* also was constantly in a wilderness, where no water was; and Gods end herein was to make him see his salvation was in God alone. Yea *Paul* himself, though by the grace of God he was so preserved, that after his conversion we read of no other extraordinary fall he had, yet lest hereby, as also from many other glorious priviledges he enjoyed, he should be

2 From Gods dispensations towards them

puffed



puffed up above measure, 2 Cor. 12. he had the buffetings of Satan, and a thorn in the flesh, to make him go out of himself, and to rest on Christ only. So that God send in putting them upon these trials, is to instruct them wherein, or in whom their strength doth consist.

3. From the Devils malice against them more than others.

Thirdly, That it is God alone who doth stablish the most bely, will appear, If you consider how great the power, subtilty and malice of the Devil is, who is set against them more than any others. As Christ told his Apostles, Satan had a desire to sift them as wheat, Luk. 22. 31. Thus the Devil doth with the greatest violence oppose those, that are more esteemed for gifts and graces than others. These like Uriah stand in the fore-front of the battle; for if they fall, if they become a stumbling block; and a reproach, God is more dishonoured, wicked men are more hardened, then if many weak Christians should fall: and therefore those that are remarkably godly, they are to be so farre from high-mindednesse and self-confidence, that indeed they are to be in the greatest fear and watchfulness; for it is such as thou art, the Devil aimeth at. The trees full of fruit have the greatest violence made upon their boughs. Now alas, what is a godly mans strength to the Devils violent assaults and subtil insinuations, if God did not strengthen him. What defence hath a sheep against a roaring Lion? Observe that reason expressed, 1 John 4. 4. You have overcome Antichrist, saith that Apostle; but why? Because greater is he that is in you, then he that is in the world. In you] that is emphaticall: It's Christ dwelling in us, that keepeth off Satans victorious power, and all his instruments. Thus also 1 John 5. 5. It is faith that overcometh the world, which alwayes relieth on a power without us; for faith as it is a grace, doth not; but as it receiveth strength from Christ: As the Vine and Ivy are not supported of themselves, but by those trees they lean unto.

4. From Gods leaving them oft to themselves, that they may see their strength to be only in him.

Fourthly, It is plain, that God alone doth establish the most able believers from that providence of God, whereby he many times leaveth such to themselves, that in their own experience and acknowledgement of others they may see all help is from God alone. This truth the godly are not alwayes so practically convinced of, as they should be. Hence they are apt to be puffed up sometimes with secret delight and complacency in themselves, for which God doth leave them to themselves, that they thereby falling, may know what they are of themselves, and what they are by the grace of God. Thus it is noted of Hezekiah, a man full of integrity in Gods wayes, 2 Chron. 32. 31. God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart. Even this good man did not know how base, false and deceitfull his heart was, and therefore God left him: and we see the blessed effect of this mercifull desertion, vers. 26. Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart. Is not here then a plain instance, that God many times in much mercy leaveth the godly to themselves, that so they may have full sentiments of this truth upon their hearts? This also was the case of Peter, who did not answer his name of a Rock in this case; and had the Church been built on him, as the Papists boast, it had fallen all into pieces; for it was Christs looking upon him that recovered him, not any strength of his own. But how cometh Peter thus to stumble and fall? It was because of his self-confidence and presumption in his own power; yea some have said that Christ left him merely to himself, not for any preceding sinne in Peter, but only by way of meer dispensation, that hereby an example of humility and holy fear might be left upon record to all ages. But that Peter's sinne of gross confidence did deserve this graduall dereliction, is more than probable: only we grant that as God doth sometimes tempt, so also forsake sometimes for sinnes antecedent, sometimes from his meer sovereignty and holy wisdom, thereby to teach man, that which otherwise would not be acknowledged. It is indeed a Rule, that Deus neminem deserit, nisi prius deseratur: God forsaketh none, that doth not forsake him; which may



may be granted as true, if we speak of a desertion by way of anger and punishment; but of a desertion by way of mercy and triall, or thereby to make way for greater dispensations of his glory, so it is not alwayes true; God may forsake gradually, that thereby he may not forsake totally and finally. Such desertions that are for a season are sometimes mercies and very usefull, being a subtraction of grace, in order to fill us with more grace: And the end of such providential administrations is to convince us fully of this truth, that we do not settle our selves, but it is God that doth it for us.

Lastly, *This truth may be demonstrated from the nature of that grace which is habitual and permanent in us.* For though that there be in us as a principle qualifying of us to work holy things with delight, joy and content, yet it cannot put us upon working without a further actual efficacious work of grace upon our souls; which you heard the Apostle calleth, *Working in us both to will and to do*, Phil. 2. 13. So that although there be never so much grace planted in us, yet that lieth asleep (as it were) and worketh not, till this efficacious grace actuate it, and put it into motion; neither ought this to be any wonder to us. For we see in natural causes, it is not enough to have a principle of life, unless God also enable us to move; *For in him we live, and move, and have our being*; much more then must this be in supernatural things, where the *Actus primus* and *secundus* is of God. Not but that in the progresse of grace we act and move, but *Acti agimus, moti movemur*. It is the grace of God that doth efficaciously incline the sanctified will to spiritual operation; then the North-wind, and the South, doe (as it were) blow upon the spices, that they may send forth their fragrant smell. It is true, at the first work of grace, there we are meere passive, but God doth not then force our will, he only changeth it; as water which naturally descends, when made air doth naturally ascend upwards. Thus the will of a man which was depressed to earthly things by sinne, when sanctified and made heavenly ascendeth up towards God and heavenly objects. By these discoveries it is manifest, that the best Saint in this world is settled by the grace of God alone. Those corruptions within him are treacherous, and would betray him into the hands of Satan, did not Christ corroborate him. And is this any wonder of man fallen, seeing *Adam* fell for want of this confirming grace, and the elect Angels do therefore not leave their habitation, as the Apostate have, because the grace of God doth confirm them? So that the good use we are to make of this Doctrine, is to be exceeding watchfull and tender about all sinne, lest thereby we provoke God to leave us. How terrible do such desertions many times prove? To whom are woes, to whom are wounds and gripes of conscience, but many times to those, who being left of God, have thereby engaged in sinfull wayes, and so having lost an holy frame of heart, have thereby deprived themselves likewise of an Evangelical, comfortable one? Take heed through thy lazinesse, negligence, pride, or some other sinne, God forsake thee, and thou become worse than *Nebuchadnezzar*, of a godly man, made like a beast. This will be bitterness in the latter end.

As for the second Doctrine, I shall not say much to that, because it hath been in part already spoken unto; it is

*That in Christ alone we are established.*

That as in the building, other stones are strengthened, because of the corner stone, or the foundation stone; or as the branch in the Vine doth therefore live and flourish, because in the Vine: so it is with us, because in Christ we are settled with Christ; in Christ we are confirmed with Christ, which made *Austin* say, *In Christo sumus Christus, extra Christum, nihil. In Christ we are even like Christ, out of Christ we are nothing at all.* To consider this, we are to know,

K k k k

First,

5. From the nature of the grace within us.

In Christ alone we are established.



1. By grace are  
Chriſtians united  
to Chriſt.

Fiſt, *That all the godly through the efficacy of Gods Spirit are united to Chriſt, and ſo become his myſtical and ſpiritual body.* By reaſon of this it is, that Chriſt dwelleth in them, and they in Chriſt; Chriſt actively communicating of his goodneſſe and virtue to them, and they paſſively receiving influences of grace from his fulneſſe. This union is repreſented in Scripture by many likenitudes, of a building, of a vine and branches, of an husband and wife; but none ſo expreſſly, as that in the Sacrament of bread and wine, denoting uſe of theſe elements are naturally turned into our nourishment, and made one with us: ſo we are in a ſpiritual and myſtical manner made one with Chriſt. This being laid as a foundation, then

2. From this  
union followeth  
our eſta-  
bliſhment.

Secondly, *From this our eſta bliſhment and ſettlement followeth, whereby we are ſure to perſevere, and nothing ſhall be able to diſſolve this union;* whence once made a true member of Chriſt, there cannot be any ſeparation made, ſo as ever ſuch a perſon ſhould at laſt be damned in hell; for that would redound to the higheſt diſhonour of Chriſt the Head, as could be imagined. The reaſon why Adam fell, though without any inherent corruption in him, was partly becauſe he was not united to Chriſt in that manner, as the weakeſt believer is now under the Covenant of Grace. And although theſe things are derided by the *Arminian*, yet this Doctrine of ſpiritual union with Chriſt, may compeſſe every one to believe the truth thereof: ſo that if we now fall, Chriſt muſt fall with us; we are not to be conſidered as ſingle perſons, ſtanding upon our own bottome, but as united to Chriſt. Therfore

3 Our eſta-  
bliſhment  
comes from  
Chriſt

1. By meritori-  
ous impetra-  
tion.

Thirdly, *Being thus in Chriſt, our ſtabliſhment ariſeth two wayes from Chriſt.*

1. *By meritorious impetration,* Chriſt as our Mediatour hath deſerved this through his propitiatory death, that we ſhould alwayes be kept his; and therefore when we have a thouſand times over deſerved, that God ſhould leave us, yet becauſe Chriſt hath deſerved that God ſhould alwayes love us, therefore it is that we ſtand faſter than Mount Zion, which yet is ſaid, not to be moved.

2. By effectual  
application.

The ſecond way is by *efficient application*; for he doth communicate of his power and ſtrength to us, whereby when we are ready of our ſelves to fall, yet he doth prevent it. So that our being in Chriſt is the foundation of all ſtrength, and all comfort, and therefore this diſcovereth the wretched eſtate of ſuch who can claim no intereſt in Chriſt; theſe are roſſed up and down from one luſt to another; they roll from one iniquity to another; the Devil doth what he pleaſeth with them, he throweth them ſometimes in the fire, and ſometimes in the water, and all this is becauſe not in Chriſt. If at any time through the common graces of Gods Spirit, they are got up to the pinnacle of the Temple, they are eminent for gifts and place in the Church of God, all the godly have admired them for a while; yet at laſt you find them blaſted and curſed in this way; you find them like ſwine wallowing in the mire, that were judged to be the ſheep of Chriſt. Wonder not, but ſay, they wanted the root, which is *Jeſus Chriſt*.





S E R M, CXXXII.

*Of the spiritual anointing which Believers receive from God.*

2 COR. I. 21.

*And hath anointed us, &c.*

**T**Hat which the Apostle called *Confirmation* and *Establisment*, the great and precious worke of God upon the hearts of his people, is metaphorically declared under three similitudes. The first is *anointing*, ἡ χρισματισμος, because the Priests in the Old Testament used by *anointing* to be inaugurated into their Office, and sometimes the Prophets also; as we reade of *Elisba*, 1 King. 19. 16. Hence *Beza* doth interpret this place, of the Ministers of the Gospel, as if by *us*, were meant *us* Ministers. For (saith he) he is asserting the dignity and excellency of the Ministry, in opposition to those calumnies that were cast upon Paul, and his Colleagues. This interpretation of *Beza's*, *Stapleton* doth greedily catch at, and maketh use thereof to oppose *Calvin*, who doth understand it of *believers* in the general. But first *Beza*, though he thinketh the Apostles meaning is principally of Church-officers, yet he doth not gain-say, if any shall understand it of believers, comparing that place of *Peter* with this, where Christians are said to be a *Royal Priesthood*, 1 Pet. 2. 9. Neither doe I meet with any Popish Commentator, but *Stapleton*, that doe expound it of Ministers only. From this word χρισματισμος, to prove the *Oyle* or *Chrisme* that is used in Popery, when they baptize children, is ridiculous; but we may speak more to that in the next verse, where *sealing* is spoken of.

The Text of it self is plain; whereas in the Old Testament Kings and Priests were set apart for their Office, by an external anointing, which did externally represent some inward power and virtue of God poured out upon them: In the New Testament, this is applied to the efficacy of Gods Spirit, that is upon believers; they have all, though not a material one, yet an invisible and spiritual anointing, which is the grace of Gods Spirit in the soul: for they are to the soul, what oyl was to the body in the several effects thereof. So that we observe,



All true believers have a spiritual anointing from God.

*All true believers have a spiritual anointing from God.*

They are Gods *anointed ones*. Thus *Psal. 105. 15. Touch not mine anointed, and doe my Prophets no harme.* Yea (*Habak. 3. 13.*) all the people of God are called *his anointed*, which caused *Grotius*, though very aburdly to understand the *Χριστος*, spoken of *Hebr. 11. 26.* where *Moses* is said, *To esteeme the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; Not of Christ, but the people of Israel; as if they were the Christ, or anointed one in that Text:* This will much gratifie the *Socinian*. In the New Testament we have a notable place to confirme this Doctrine, *1 John 2. 20. But ye have an unction from the holy one, and ye know all things. And vers. 27. The anointing which you have received of him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you.* Here is the *anointing* or *ointment*, as some understand, because *anointing* (say they) is a transient action, and so passeth away; whereas the Apostle speaketh of something permanent in us, we may comprehend both. Now it is good to mark the opposition; for the Apostle having before spoken of the Antichristian party, how that deluded many by specious pretences, he cometh with an adverbative, *But ye have the unction*; by that you are enabled to discern betweene falshood and truth: Yea so farre it worketh in you, that ye need not any man should teach you; that is (say some) not exclusively, but comparatively; for so a negative expression is sometimes used: If there be not this unction from God, all humane teaching is in vain. So that as *Calvin*, and others well observe, he doth not speak here against the use of the Ministry, as *Illuminatists*, and others pretend. For then why should the Apostle teach them in this Epistle, while he saith, *They need no man to teach them?* Again, the Apostle speaketh of the fundamentals and essentials of Religion; as if he had said, *You are not so rude and ignorant, as to be taught the principles*; for so all Christians growne up, should not need a Ministry for plantation, and a foundation, but edification and further instruction. Therefore because the *Hebrewes* were negligent herein, how severely doth the Apostle reprove them, *Hebr. 5. and Chap. 6?* Further, the meaning may be, *Ye need not any other man*, that is of the heretical way, should teach you, you have received the truth of God from us, you need not goe to them to be instructed. Thus the Orthodox may say, We have informed you in the sound knowledge of God, you need not to go to *Papists*, to *Socinians* for more light and truth.

By this Text we see, that though *anointing* doth chiefly referre to the worke of grace, yet it also comprehends *knowledge*; for *Oyle* was used to keep up the light of their lampes; and therefore Priests and Prophets were *anointed*. So that this very expression is very noble and magnificent, *You are the anointed ones of God: if you doe truly believe, you have an unction from the holy one.* Now how will this title be applied to ignorant and prophane persons? Have they this choice *anointing*? May you not call a dunghill sweet ointment as well?

But to enlarge this excellent point, we must

1. Who is the fountain of this ointment, even God and Christ.

First, Know, Who is the fountain of this spiritual ointment; and the Text saith, *It is God.* John saith, *The holy one*, that is, the Lord Christ, who therefore hath his name *Messias* and *Christ*, because he is anointed as the Head, and then (as from *Aaron's* head) it runneth downe to his members; he is the *anointed Head*, and we the *anointed Members*. Whether this *anointing* of Christ referreth to his Divine Nature, or Humane, need-

eth



eth not to be disputed; for it is certaine it belongeth to him as God-man. Hence *Isaiah* 61. 1. Christ saith, *The Lord hath anointed me to preach the Gospel.* *Acts* 10. 38. God is there said, *To anoint Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power.* So that this anointing of Christ was in him, as in us, the cause of all that power and vertue we doe partake of. Therefore when it is said (*Psalms* 45. vers. 7.) of Christ, *Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity; therefore God hath anointed thee with oyle of gladnesse above thy fellows.* That is not an argument *a priori*; as if therefore Christ were anointed, because he loved righteousness, but *a posteriori* by way of signe and manifestation; hereby it was made known, that he was the anointed of God. Thus the spiritual anointing of Gods people is the cause of all that fragrancy and sweet smell that is in their lives.

Secondly, *Let us compare the properties of material oyle with this spiritual anointing.* And

First, It was used (as you heard) in setting apart of Kings and Priests for their Office; yea most things in the Temple were consecrated by the anointing of them. So that they were not afterwards to be converted to any common use; neither might any take of the ointment that the Priest was anointed with, and apply it to other matters. Now this denoteth both the Dignity and Duty of all true believers. The Dignity, they are Gods anointed ones, therefore touch them not, for God will avenge their quarrel; by this we are both Kings and Priests; Kings spiritually conquering the world, as also our owne lusts and sinnes. Shalt thou who art a King over thy passions be a slave to them? And then we are also Priests, because we are to offer up soule and body, as a Sacrifice unto God: we are not to live to our selves, but to him. Againe, here is our Duty, for we being thus Gods anointed ones, his consecrated ones, we must not apply our selves to lusts and sinnes, or defile our selves with the pitch that is in the world. Shall a man with this spiritual anointing roll himselfe in the mire and vomit of sinne? What pride and curiosity hath been used about ointments for smell and beauty? Insomuch that the very Poet could say, *Male olet, qui bene olet.* May not this shame every godly Christian, to think how much vain and proud persons do regard such precious ointments, that are for the body only, above what thou doest for soul-ointment, and the spiritual excellency thereof?

2. The comparison betwixt material, and this spiritual oyl. They are like,

1. As oyl was used in the consecration of things to God.

Secondly, *Oyle was used to comfort the heart of a man, and beautifie the countenance.* Therefore (*Psalms* 45.) it is called, *The oyle of gladnesse.* Hence it was that in their Feasts and Nuptial banquets, they anointed themselves. The oyle of gladnesse is opposed to mourning; and in this sense the Spirit of God may well be compared to oyle; for he is the Comforter as well as the Sanctifier. And this is part of the meaning in the Text, at least by way of consequent. For where the Spirit of God doth witnesse and seale to the true believer, that is many times accompanied with great joy and consolation. *Ointment and perfume rejoyce the heart,* (saith Solomon, *Prov.* 27. 9.) How much more will those inward and effectual operations of Gods Spirit? It is true, joy and reall godlinesse are many times separated from one another. The chariots of a godly soule, many times goe heavily for want of this oyle in the wheels. Onely we are to know, that there is an aptitude and fitnessse in the connexion betweene grace and consolation, godlinesse and delight. Pray therefore for this anointing of Gods Spirit, even to fill thy heart with joy unspeakable. For this will make thee like *Elijah*, goe to Heaven in a fiery Chariot.

2. As it comforts the heart and beautifies the countenance.



riot. Thy duties, thy performances, these will have more vigour and activity in them.

2. As it refreshed the weary.

Thirdly, *Oyle was used to refresh those that were weary.* The Jewes did use it to those who travailed, by way of restauration (as it were) to them. Thus (*Luke 7. 46.*) that woman *anointed Christs feet with ointment.* This was done for refocillation after lassitude. And thus also the Spirit of God, with his gracious effects, doth wonderfully exhilarate and cheer the heart after many wearisome labours and temptations. The body is not so much subject to wearinesse and restlesnesse, as the soule is. The way to Heaven is a streight and narrow way. Hence the Spirit of God is like *ointment* to refresh us in these laborious exercises: arguments taken from the nature of the Gospel, from the excellency and usefulness of Gods promises; these doe administer much spiritual ease and content to the soul.

4. As it healeth wounds.

Fourthly, *Oyle was used to those who were wounded, as being of special operation to heale their wounds.* Therefore *Luke 10. 34.* the good Samaritane *tooke oyle and poured it into the wounds* of that man of *Jericho.* And now that man was but once wounded, whereas the godly man receiveth many wounds several wayes; sometimes through his owne carelesnesse, and negligence, he wounds his owne heart sadly; sometimes God for special ends seemeth to wound him with the wounds of an angry one. Oh then how blessed is it to have *oyle* poured into these bleeding wounds! Yet of such suppling and mollifying efficacy is the Spirit of God to afflicted consciences for sinne. And if you aske, What is this *oyle* that is to be poured into such wounds? I answer, It is the *balme of Gilead*, the *oyle of the Gospel*, the *precious promises* that are in Christ. The Spirit of God doth anoint the soul with this *oyle*, and thereby the heart recovereth of those sad and deadly wounds which the Law, and the guilt of sinne had made upon it.

5. In that it is delightfom to the nostrils.

Fifthly, *Oyntment hath its peculiar smell and fragrancy, it recreateth the nostrils of others.* Not onely they that have the ointment, but others that are in company partake of the smell thereof. Therefore we reade of the Church, (*Cantic. 1. 3. Chap. 4. 10.*) so greatly affected with the *smell of Christs ointments.* What is that, but onely the lovelinesse and excellency in the Lord Christ, which a gracious soul is so deeply affected with? For this it is, that the *Virgins are said to love him.* By *Virgins* are meant sincere and upright persons, these follow Christ because of the favour of his ointments. It is not any carnal advantage, or worldly respect, but the meere preciousnesse that is in him, as a Mediatour, and as the husband of the soule, that maketh the godly thus presse after him. Now as it is thus with Christ, so it ought to be with Christians. As a man cannot hide the smell of his ointments, but others will be refreshed with it; so it ought to be with a Christian; all his whole life should be a sweet favour, and a precious odour; there should be that in his conversation; which should make every one that beholdeth him to be in love with him: They should love to be in his company, in his presence. As they say of the Dove, when it hath any precious ointment poured on it, it maketh all the rest flocke after it. Especially this should make all the godly take heed of those things that will make Religion to stinke, or their persons to be vile and abominable before others. *Solomon saith, A dead flie falling into a box of ointment, will make it to stinke, Eccles. 10. 1.* If a dead flie, what then will a dead toad, or a piece of a dead dogge? Such carrion must needs make a man to be abhorred. The very consideration



deration that thou art anointed, ought to work upon thee so farre, as to do nothing that may make thee to be abhorred.

Sixthly, *Oyle was used to mollifie and soften things that were harsh and stiffe.* So (*Isaiah 10. 27.*) the yoke is said to be destroyed, because of the anointing. Thus the graces of Gods Spirit are to the soule, they soften and mollifie the hardnesse of thy heart. How often doth it melt thy stubborne soule, and make thee kindly relent under all that stubbornnesse and disobedience which thou hast shewed to God?

6. As it mollifies.

Seventhly, *Oyle was used to comfort and strengthen men in their limbs.* And therefore those who were accustomed to bodily exercises, did make much use of it. It was necessary to combate and conflict with enemies. Thus also it is here; all Christians are called to a spiritual warfare, and that with principalities and powers in high places, as well as with flesh and blood. They are continually to put on their armour against all the assaults of the Devil. Now this could not be done, unlesse we had this *oyle*, this anointing from the Spirit of God. In the Spirit of God, we are to goe out against all the assaults and temptations of Satan. In the name of Christ, we are to set upon these *Goliaths*. How many have been overcome in this battel, even of Gods own people? because they had not this establishing grace ready at hand. Doe not thinke to get into Heaven without a fore conflict with *Anakims* in the way. There must be a wilderness and a red Sea to passe through, before thou canst enter into *Canaan*. And therefore for this end, have we this anointing, whereby we may be the more confirmed; and having done all things, to stand, as it is *Ephes. 6. 13.* What more is to be said to this point, will come in upon the other metaphorical termes.

7. As it strengthens and comforts the limbs.

Therefore let us improve this. And

First, We see what a glorious and excellent title the name of a Christian is, for that signifieth as much as one anointed. If thou art a Christian in deed, as well as in name, thou hast this anointing and unction that is here spoken of. How farre then are all prophane and wretched sinners from the reality of this name? What have they to doe with the name, who are so contrary to the thing it self? Art thou anointed, that smellest of the very flames of hell? Thy tongue, thy actions doe all discover it. There are no sonnes of *Boanerges* that can thunder terribly enough against such reproaches and dishonours, yea blasphemies to the holy name and profession of Christianity.

*Use 2. Of Instruction.* What is a special preservative against all heresies and damnable opinions? even this *spiritual unction*. For that doth not onely illuminate the minde, but sanctifie the heart also. And if a man have never so much knowledge by education, and other meanes, if he hath not also this spiritual teaching, he is a ready prey for the Devil. Onely you must know, that this unction is not speedily, and in an instant accomplished in the people of God, it is successively, and by degrees. Even as it was with the Lord Christ, though he was anointed to be the Lord of his people, and he had the right to this even from his Incarnation, yet the actual exercise, and manifestation of this was not compleated, till his Ascension into his glory. Thus the *spiritual unction* of Gods people will not be fully finished, till they are made perfect in Heaven. And therefore for the present, both their knowledge, and their graces are but in part; which consideration should keepe us from being scandalized; if we see that even those believers, who yet have all received this unction



on from God, if in things not fundamentall they differ from one another.

*Use 3. Of Exhortation, To wicked men, to take heed how they persecute, or oppose these anointed ones; how contemptible and vile they may be in thy eyes, it is no matter; you see how the Lord hath dignified them, he hath set his mark upon them: what you doe against them, he taketh as done against himselfe; they are as the apple of his eye. David when but cutting off a piece of Saul's garment, was smitten in his heart, because he was the Lords anointed; yet that was onely an external unction, Saul had not the spiritual anointing. Do thou therefore take heed of reproaching, deriding and persecuting such as God hath anointed with the graces of his Spirit.*

*Use 4. Of Admonition to all the Godly, that they should doe nothing unsuitably to this anointing. Heresies and impieties doe not agree with this excellent composition. Thy spiritual ointment is to discover it selfe in all companies, in all temptations, in all exercises. The more, precious ointment is stirred, the sweeter it smelleth: So the more God afflicteth thee, chastizeth thee, the more he doth pound thee (as it were) in the mortar, the more doth thy preciousnesse manifest thy selfe. We reade, (Matthew 26. 7, 13.) that when a woman poured an Alabaſter box of precious ointment upon Christs head, that Christ did so farre encourage her, that he said, Wheresoever the Gospell should be preached, there also should this, that the woman had done, for a memorial of her. And yet when thou confessest Christ in the midst of a wicked generation, when thou art ready to part with all for Christ, when he requireth it, thou doest more for Christ, than this woman did. Look then to thy self, that all thoughts, all words and actions favour of this ointment; whatsoever is of sinne and lust within thee, thinke that is of the dung-hill, that is of vomit and filthy mire.*



## SERM. CXXXIII.

*Gods People are his sealed ones.*

2 COR. I. 22.

*Who hath also sealed us,*

**W**E come to the second noble Priviledge which the Apostle attributeth to the *Corinthians*, for although we told you the same benefit is represented under three metaphoricall similitudes, yet every one of them hath a distinct notion, as this of *sealing* hath from that of *anointing*, though both intend the confirmation and establishment mentioned in the former verse: Some Popish Writers would from hence prove their spurious non-instituted Sacraments, as by *anointing* they would have their *oyle* in baptism; as also in their *extreme unction* established; and by *sealing* their *Sacrament of Confirmation*, wherein likewise they use their *chrisme* and *oil*, blasphemously calling it *oleum salutis*, the *oyle of salvation*. Hence they tell us *confirmation* is usually called in antiquity *signaculum*, and the *obsignation of the holy Ghost*, bringing this Text for the proof thereof, as *Viccomes* a great Popish Ritualist, lib. 1. & 2. de *confirmatione*, would make us beleieve: but first this Interpretation confuteth that of *Stapleton*, who limits the interpretation to Ministers only; whereas *Baptism*, *Confirmation*, and *extreme Unction* were applyed to private Christians: and secondly, they are never yet able to prove any such Sacrament, of *confirmation*, as they speak of: Indeed in Antiquity there was *Confirmation* used in the Church of God; When persons baptized in their infancy were afterwards by Church-officers called to account about their knowledge and Christian life; wherein if approved, they were commended by prayer to God for their establishment in the Christian faith against all persecutions and oppositions: The use whereof *Calvin* wisheth were brought again into the Church of God; as being advantageous to prevent heresies, as also to reprove the carelesnesse and negligence of parents about the education of their children; but as for that abominable abuse of this afterwards in Popery, making a *Sacrament* thereof, adding thereunto many Popish and ridiculous ceremonies; This is a noisome weed, not any plant of Gods planting: We are therefore to enquire what is the *Sealing* that here *beleevers* are said to have from God, and that will appear to be a metaphor taken from men, who for severall ends make use of *seals*, and so accordingly it is to be applyed to that work of Gods spirit, which is in the hearts of *beleevers*: All which will better appear in the opening of the doctrine, which is,

*That the people of God are his sealed ones.*

To improve which truth, Consider,

First, *That we reade of an active sealing and a passive sealing: An active sealing*

L III

The people of God are his sealed ones.

1. There is an active and a passive sealing.



ling is, when we by profession or otherwise do give our Testimony to the Truths of God, for when a man receiveth the Word of God as his Truth, and doth accordingly manifest this in his life; herein he doth seal to God: So the Evangelist John, chap 3.33. *He that hath received his Testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true.* By which expression, you see of what necessity faith in the Word of God is, with the profession thereof in our lives: It is a *sealing that God is true*: insomuch that he who beleeve h not, as much as in him lieth, maketh God a lyar. Oh consider this, thou who art tempted to unbelief, to distrust, not to rest upon the Promises of God. What an hainous sin is this, not to give testimony to Gods Truth? but this we are not to speak of: Therefore there is a *passive sealing*, which we reade applyed to Christ, and to all beleevers: To Christ, thus Joh. 6.27. *For him hath God the Father sealed*: How was that? when by the wonderfull miracles that were wrought, he was confirmed to be the Messias. And then for beleevers they are said to be sealed not only in this place, but Eph. 1.13. and Eph. 4.30. Thus you see the people of God have a *sealing*.

2. Gods sealing of his people is either visible or invisible.

But in the next place, Gods sealing of his people is twofold, either visible or invisible, externall or internall; Gods visible sealing was again twofold, extraordinary or ordinary; extraordinary were the miracles and wonderful signes, which many beleevers did in the first plantation of the Gospel: Thus Paul calls miracles the *signes of his Apostleship*, 2 Cor. 12.12. and they are said to be a *sign to those that beleeve not*, 1 Cor. 14.22. Now some would have this sealing, which beleevers are said to receive, meant of these extraordinary miracles, which were visible to the world; but that cannot be, partly because all true beleevers in those dayes had them not, and some who were not true beleevers did partake of them; and partly because that was but for a season, while the Gospel was first preached: whereas the Scripture speaketh of such a sealing, as the godly may have in all ages, even till their redemption.

In the next place there are visible ordinary seals, such are the two Sacraments of baptism and the Lords Supper; for as circumcision is called Rom. 4. 11. *the seal of the righteousness of faith*, so that is to be applyed to every other Sacrament being of the genericall nature thereof: It is true, the Apostle in this Text and other places, may happily allude to this Sealing in the Sacrament, which is visible and externall; but because the outward application of these is to the unregenerate and hypocrite, as well as the truly godly: therefore the Apostle meaneth a further thing, even some proper priviledge that is peculiar to the godly only, and that invisibly or spiritually in our hearts, as the next words shew, *the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts*; So that as the anointing is a spiritual invisible thing, thus also must the sealing be: Therefore before we come to declare the nature and use of this ob signation: Let us consider what is implied in the metaphor of sealing, for thereby we shall in part be brought to understand the admirable nature thereof.

What the sealing of thee godly implys.  
1. The great esteem with God.

And first, Sealing of the godly, doth imply the precious and excellent esteem they have with God; for so amongst men, those things are sealed up by us, as we account precious: None use to seal up dung and pibbles in a bag. Thus Hag. 2.23. God promiseth Zerubbabel, *he will make him as a signet, because he had chosen him*, that is, he should be very precious and dear to him as the diamond in a ring. Therefore we have that expression, Jer. 22.22. *Though Coniah were the signet of my right hand* (saith God) *yet I would pluck him from thence*, that is, though never so dear to him; We have also the Church praying, Can. 8.6. *Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm*: As these who dearly love any were wont to have their image engraven upon the rings they did wear on their hands, to have them continually in remembrance. Thus the Church prayeth that she may be put as a seal even upon the heart of Christ: so that



that by this expression is meant the preciousness, the high esteem God hath of them; they are his Jewels, they are his peculiar treasure; and therefore it is that he doth thus seal them.

2. Sealing is for the *safety and preservation of any thing*, that we would not have lost. Thus *Dan. 6. 17.* when *Daniel* was cast into prison, there was a stone laid upon the mouth of the den, and the King *sealed it* with his own signet, that so there might be no hope of having *Daniel* released; and thus God *sealeth* his people by special grace preserving them, that they shall never totally and finally be lost, though Satan be never so watchful to destroy them: They are *sealed*, and therefore they shall certainly persevere; but because this will come more fully in the next particular, I passe it over.

2. Their safety

3. *Sealing doth not only imply safety, but security also against such danger that is imminent upon us*: God sealeth his people, that the destruction which is consuming of others may pass them by. Thus we read in *Ezekiel, cap. 9. 4.* when the Angel was to destroy the inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, yet there was a command given to set a mark upon the foreheads of such as did sigh and cry for the abominations thereof: When the *Egyptians* likewise were to be destroyed, they passed by every house that had blood sprinkled upon the posts thereof. *Rahab's* red thread was like a seal to preserve her from destruction, and her family; hence *Rev. 7. 4.* we read of many thousands of Gods servants *sealed in the foreheads*; and they were therefore *sealed*, that they might be preserved from desolation: This sealing was not any external mark, no more than the mark of the beast was, but that real profession of Christ which they put forth in the midst of all dangers, not defiling themselves with the impurities of others. And thus God doth still seal his people, that *Satan* though he desire to winnow and sift them, yet is not able to devour them as his prey. Oh what unspeakable mercy is this, when the justice of God goeth with a drawn sword to throw such and such into hell; he passeth by thee because thou art one of Gods sealed people.

3. Security.

Fourthly, *Sealing is for the differencing and discriminating of persons*; Thus the Shepherd setteth a proper mark to know his own sheep by: The Souldier he hath his proper badge and colours to discern what Generall he belongeth unto: And in this sense, though not principally, the Sacraments are seals; hereby we are acknowledged to be the Lords people, and so differenced from all that are enemies and strangers to him, but this is more remarkably seen in this *spirituall sealing*, for thereby we are not only distinguished from the heathenish world, but from every hypocrite in the Church of God: Though many may go far in profession, in parts, in gifts, so as to be admirable in the eyes of others, yet none have this *sealing* but the truly godly man. Every gifted man is not this *sealed* beleever; None hath this but the true childe of God: The spirit of God doth not seal, but where it hath sanctified; Therefore

4. Their difference from others.

Fifthly, This *sealing* doth suppose the work of grace truly wrought in a man, *Sealing* doth not make him godly properly, but supposeth him so: Thus *Eph. 1. 13.* *after ye believed ye were sealed*: there was first the work of sanctification, and then of oblation. It is true *Zanchy* upon that place maketh *sealing* to be the impression of grace upon the heart, even as in *sealing* the print of the seal is stamped upon the wax; and so farre we may yeeld that the increase of grace and confirmation therein is a *sealing of the spirit*; but yet to speak exactly this *sealing* is after the work of grace in the soul: Even as it is in the Sacraments: The externall signe or seal doth not make the promise, but supposeth it; so in this inward *sealing*, grace is not thereby wrought in us, unlesse it be in the further degrees thereof, but doth confirm that which is in us: and thus seals are to confirm contracts, not make them as is to be shewed; yet though

it



it be not the divine impression of grace, yet this seal is alwaies supposed; God doth not set to his seal to a blank, and hereby this sealing is distinguished from all carnal presumption, and the delusions of Satan, for the devil bath as it were his sealing, he confirmeth and establisheth men in hereticall doctrines, and they are ready to take this for the oblation of Gods own spirit; when heretiques give their bodies to be burnt, professing they have much peace and joy of conscience; Here the Kings Seal is counterfeited, as it were; They make a diabolicall delusion, to be the holy sealing of Gods Spirit. Thus as in sanctification, there is the true work of Gods grace, and a counterfeit, that which doth resemble and is like it; so in the witnessing and sealing of Gods Spirit, there also may be a resemblance of it, which yet is not that glorious priviledge indeed: only as a man that is awake doth certainly know he is so, and not in a dream, though men in a dream imagine themselves to be awake, when they are deceived. Thus where the sealing of Gods Spirit is, there the authority and light of it doth powerfully discover it self to be of God: even as the Sun by its own light doth discover it self to be the Sun; though they that think they have it may be deceived, yet those that have it are sure they do enjoy it. Hence

6. Secrecy  
and privacy.

Sixthly, This sealing doth imply *secrecy and privacy*; That which is closely reserved, as *Deut. 32. 34. Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures?* saith God. Thus also *Iob saith, cap. 14. 17. his transgression was sealed up in a bag*; God did take speciall notice of it in time to punish it; Now in this sense also we may apply this sealing of Gods Spirit: It is very secret, hidden and unknown, and that in a twofold respect.

1. The nature of it is a *mystery*, and hardly unfolded; Inasmuch that as the *lamb* in the Revelation was found only worthy to open the seals. Thus onely men enlightened by the Spirit of God, and experimentally taught of him, can favourily explain this. Come to the Learned and most eminent men devoid of spirituall discerning, and whose senses are not exercised evangelically, who have not the Spirit of Adoption effectually working in them, and they can no more speak with understanding to this point, then *Nicodemus* did to the doctrine of regeneration. He will say with those in the Prophet *Isay, cap. 29. 11. I cannot read this book, for it is sealed.* But then

2. The secrecy of it is discovered, because *none know what it is, but he that hath it.* As none knoweth what Parents affections are but parents; none knoweth what love is, but he that loveth: So none know what this sealing of Gods Spirit is, but he that doth partake of it: Therefore this sealing is compared to other things, *Rev. 2. 17. to the hidden manna*: There was the manna that did fall from heaven, of which all did eat promiscuously; and then there was the manna hidden in the ark. The godly man is said to eat of this: It is likewise called the *white stone*, which is a note of absolution, and justification when accused, and that with a *new name upon it, which none knoweth, save he that receiveth it.* By this expression it is clear, that the nature and efficacy of of this Sealing is understood only by those who enjoy it; and therefore no unregenerate man is able to conceive rightly about it, no more than a blinde man can about the Sunne: yea, the godly man himself, though he feel it, yet he cannot expresse it to another: Even as we cannot expresse the life we live unto another; we feel it, but cannot describe it.

7. Confirmation.

Lastly, Which is the chiefeft of all, and most principally intended in this expression, *Sealing was to confirm and secure all contracts and bargains made amongst men.* Thus *Jeremiah cap. 32. 10.* when he purchased some land, he had the evidence sealed: In which respect some understand that place, *2 Tim. 2. 19. The foundation of the Lord standeth sure having this seal*: by *Septuagint* they understand not the foundation of an house, because that doth not use to be



be sealed, but a contract or bargain; to which a seal is annexed, but that is not so probable; only in the generall, seals are chiefly to secure and confirm: and for this end it is, that we have the Spirit of God sealing; for the sense of our unworthinesse and guilt doth make us very propense to diffidence, to distrust, to continuall fears about Gods love to us: and therefore as we need the Spirit of God to sanctifie us, so also to witnesse and seal unto us, which is more largely to be treated of.



## S E R M. CXXXIV.

*Of Gods Spirit Sealing his People.*

2 COR. I. 22.

*Who hath also sealed us.*

**W**Hat is comprehended in the expression of *sealing* hath been already declared: I shall therefore in the next place consider of, and compare some equivalent Texts of Scripture with this, and then from those conjoynd we may be able to finde out the nature of this *obsignation*; for although our principall endeavour is to be made partaker of it, yet it is very necessary in its kinde to know what it is: Though it cannot be denied but many of Gods people may have it, and yet not give the definition of it; Even as they may beleeve and be regenerated, and not happily be able to give an exact description of these things. As many a man hath health, may sleep well, and yet is not able to tell you, what health or sleep is.

The first Text, which will afford much light to this we are upon, is that famous place set like a beacon upon the mount, and much agitated between Papists and Protestants in the doctrine of assurance, Rom. 8. 18. *where the spirit it self is said to bear witnesse with our spirit, that we are the children of God.* I shall not insist upon the controversies on this place, either grammaticall or reall, but take the positive truth plainly delivered: Here the godly, who all have the spirit of God, first sanctifying and leading them on in all their waies, whereby they are said to be spiritually minded, are in the next place declared to have the spirit of God in another manner working upon them, and that is *to witnesse with our spirit.* So that the spirits Testimony is not single and immediate, as when there was a voice heard, saying, *This is my beloved Sonne.* No such Enthusiastical impressions and impulses are to be dreamed of, but mediately and conjunctly with our spirits; By it our consciences are so enlightned that we are thereby enabled to be perswaded, that we are the Children of God; for that you see is the object of the Testimony, that is the matter witnessed, *that we are the children of God.* You see then, here is no encouragement for the Popish doctrine of doubting; nay, when they go the highest, allowing a moral certitude, such which excludeth all fear to the contrary, yet it doth not rise up high enough to this glorious priviledge spoken of. For as with the spirit in Sanctification of us, moral vertues came far short of the gra-

Scriptures equivalent to the text.  
Rom. 8. 18.



ces and fruit of the spirit; So doth an humane perswasion from the sincerity of our conscience within us, of this witnessing and sealing of Gods Spirit.

Gal. 4. 6.

A second Text reducible to this, is Gal 4. 6. *Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Sonne into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* This is nothing but the sealing in my Text, only the words are full of divine worth; *Because ye are sonnes;* Therefore none but the *Sonnes of God* have this privilege: Children of the devil cannot pretend to this. Thou who art not born of God stand aloof off, this doth not belong to thee: As thou knowest not what it meaneth, yea, with *Eſau*, for thy morsels, dost prophaneely despise this privilege; so neither doth God give such childrens bread to dogs, or Pearls to swine. Again, *God hath sent the spirit of his Sonne*, you see our *Sonship* is built upon Christs *Sonship*; our *Sonship* of Adoption is established upon that *Sonship* which is by nature in him. He doth not speak here of that eternal mission of the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Sonne, but a temporal one bestowed on believers; and he saith, *the spirit of his Son*, because by Christs death this spirit in its peculiar operation, is as it were purchased for the godly: For had not Christ made an atonement, the Spirit of God could not have been given us, either for sanctification or consolation. Further, *This is sent into our hearts*, not into our memories or mindes only; for the temporary beleever hath some superficial and vanishing perswasion of Gods favour towards him; but it is *sent into our hearts*, implying the full, deep, and through possession that it hath of the godly. Lastly, Here is the notable and glorious effect, *it maketh us to cry*, that is, fervently, confidently, and boldly; *God, Father; Abba, Father.* Some read it indicatively in this sense, *God is my Father*; Some by way of wish and prayer; it cometh all to one. These are two words signifying the same thing, teaching us, that both *Jew* and *Gentile* is indulged this privilege, or else it's germinated for assurance sake: Oh then how unquiet and restlesse should the people of God be, till they finde this work of *the spirit of Adoption* upon them? Thou daily enquirest after the spirit in its sanctification of thee, how it maketh thee more heavenly, how it mortifieth thy lusts; and dost mourn because thou dost not partake of it in a greater measure. Why doth not thy soul also long after the fruit of this *spirit of Adoption* in thee? Dost thou observe how it subdueth thy slavish fears? how it inclineth thee to a filiall and Evangelicall affection towards God as a Father? I tell thee, thy life is never a Gospel-life till this be obtained. As therefore these blinde men cryed, *Jesus have mercy on us*, though the Disciples reprov'd them, and bid them hold their peace; so also let it be with thee: whatsoever temptations, guilt and fears, thy heart suggesteth to the contrary, do thou notwithstanding boldly cry, *God my Father.*

1 Cor. 2. 12.

The third Text to illustrate this, 1 Cor. 2. 12. *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given us of God.* Here we see two principles opposed as contrary to one another, *the spirit of the world*, and *the spirit of God*; and he who hath the spirit of God, hath it for this end partly, that he might *know the things which God hath freely given him*; implying, that without this spirit we could not discern of these things: Even as if a man had not a rational soul bestowed upon him, he could not discern the things of reason, but would be as a beast. So did not God bestow his spirit upon us, we were no wayes able to discern of those Gospel-mercies which are bestowed upon us. He saith, *which are freely given us*, us in particular, that we might not think he speaketh of the privileges of the Gospel in the generall, remission of sins, and sanctification in the generall, but as applyed to this and that subject: So that if a man have no more than the spirit of the world, if he have not as yet  
this



this spirit of God, dwelling in him, he is not a fit auditor for this truth. If *Aristotle* thought not young persons fit auditors for his morall Philosophy, how much more are we to judge every man, though of never such abilities and parts, yet if destitute of the spirit of God, altogether incapable of this truth? Therefore the spiritual hearers are only such who can give their testimony to these things. There must be a spiritual life, a spiritual foundation, before there can be this spiritual superstruction.

A fourth Text is, *1 Joh. 3.24.* and indeed that Apostle doth often speak to *1 Joh 3.24.* this sealing of Gods Spirit upon the hearts of beleevers, though in other terms. This I have mentioned is pregnant; for having said, *that he who keepeth Gods Commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him.* Whereas it might be said, how shall we know that he dwelleth in us? May we not be deluded and deceived? No (saith he) *hereby we know that he abideth in us by the spirit which he hath given us:* and lest any man, though living loosely and carnally, should pretend to this spirit, he saith, *They that have it keep his Commandments.* Thus doubtings and sinfull diffidence is excluded on one hand, and all carnal presumption on the other hand.

The last Text to bring in assistance to this truth, shall be, *1 John 5. 8, 9, 10.* where the Apostle speaketh of *three Witnesses* on earth, as he had before in heaven, viz. *water, and the blood, and the spirit.* Now although there be many perplexed controversies about this passage, yet I shall pitch upon that which is most probable, without further disquieting of you. It seemeth to be without doubt that the Apostle alludeth to the legall administrations, wherein there was blood for expiation, and water for cleansing: by which is represented justification and sanctification; and these being wrought in us, do evidently witnesse, that *Jesus is the Christ*, and Sonne of God. We finding these glorious effects upon our souls, cannot but acknowledge that Doctrine; but because these are not enough of themselves, seeing that sanctified and justified persons may be under great discouragements, therefore he addeth the Spirit also. It is true, the same spirit is said to be a *witnesse in heaven*, but that was because of the extraordinary and visible Testimony that it gave to Christ; but here it speaketh of the witnesse it giveth on earth; and that must be the sealing spoken off in other places; for he saith, *verse 6. It is the spirit that beareth witnesse,* because the spirit is truth, having there also mentioned *water and blood:* *Verse 10. he saith, He that beleeveth on the Sonne of God, hath the witnesse in himself.* Thus you see that as God hath abundantly provided for the holiness of his people by his spirit, to quicken them up therein; so also for the assurance and consolation of his children, to establish them therein. Oh how greatly are we indebted unto the Lord Jesus Christ, who giveth us his spirit not only to leade us into the truth, and mortifie the deeds of the flesh, but also to fill us with comfort, and to assure us that we are the children of God: So that it is the duty of the Ministers of the Gospel, not only to improve the former truth, but this also; and to presse you upon the sealing work of Gods Spirit, as well as the sanctifying: Hath not the Spirit of God this Name given it, to be called the Comforter, *John 14.* and shall we divide the operations of Gods Spirit, minding him as he is an holy spirit, but not a comforting Spirit?

Having thus informed you what the Scripture declareth in this matter; I shall give you a large and popular description of the nature of this sealing, and the opening of the several parts touched therein, will much conduce to the knowledge thereof.

The description of the sealing of Gods Spirit.



The description  
of the seal-  
ing of Gods  
spirit.

The *sealing* of Gods Spirit may be described after this manner: It is a *supernaturall* and *gracious* work of Gods Spirit upon the hearts of sanctified persons, in a secret and unspeakable manner; whereby they are confirmed and established in the Covenant of grace, as belonging to them in particular; by such means which God hath appointed thereunto, that through the sense thereof they may daily walk more and more boldly, joyfully, and thankfully, notwithstanding all discouragements to the contrary, till they be made completely happy in heaven.

I have made this description the larger, because I would take in every particular considerable about it, as much as may be.

1. It is a super-  
natural and  
gracious work

And First, I give two *Qualifications* or *Adjuncts* to this work of Gods Spirit: It is *supernatural* and *gracious*. *Supernatural*; and that if we respect either rectified nature or corrupted nature: Rectified nature, for *Adam* in the state of integrity, though he was made perfectly holy, yet he had not this Gospel-sealing; no more then he was in Christ, as a Mediatour: for had he been thus sealed, he would certainly have persevered; and although *Adam* was partaker of the holy Ghost, yet it was as he is the third person, not as the spirit of Christ, *viz.* purchased by his death for those that are his, so that in this respect we may say, this *sealing* is a priviledge above the nature of *Adam*, while considered before his apostacy: but then I call it *supernaturall*, chiefly in respect of corrupted nature; for as man naturally of himself hath no power to that which is gracious, so neither to that which is comfortable and joyfull. All the world, all Ministers and Angels, cannot pour one drop of this assurance and joy into thy soul, unlesse the Spirit of God inable thee thereunto. As it is *supernaturall*, so it is *gracious*; for this floweth from the former: There is nothing in thee to deserve this establishing; as Gods grace sanctifying found thee dead in thy finnes, so his sealing and comforting findeth thee in a guilty despairing way: and therefore as God might leave every prophane man to wallow in his lusts, and so let him perish; thus also might he forsake every guilty conscience under the burthen of thy finnes, and suffer thee to be a *Cain*, to be a *Judas*, even to fall from an hell here into an hell hereafter: So that not only by grace we are sanctified, but by grace we are healed. Bless God for any establishment of soul against fears and doubts, as well as for victory against any lusts: It is merely of Free-grace that we are thus sealed.

2 Of Gods  
spirit.

In the next place, Secondly, we have the generall nature of it, with the efficient cause, *The work of Gods Spirit*: It is true, in the Text it is said, That God doth seal us; and so whatsoever works there are, *ad extra*, from God to the creature, they are all common to the three Persons: yet there is a peculiar order and appropriation which the Scripture taketh notice of; So that it is made the work of the Father to send his Sonne into the world: It is made the work of the Sonne, to offer up himself a Sacrifice for our finnes; And it is made the proper work of Gods Spirit, to apply the benefits of Christs death to our souls; therefore sanctification is attributed to the Spirit, so also consolation and sealing thereunto. Thus the Texts we mentioned formerly give all this work to the Spirit of God, as in an appropriated manner, doing this for us: It is not then of our selves, or of our own power, that we can obtain this priviledge, but it is wrought alone by Gods Spirit: As we have no free-will to the grace of God, so neither to the comforts. God as he is called a God of all grace, so a God of all consolation: and *Gal. 5. Joy is the fruit of Gods Spirit*, as well as Faith, Love, and Repentance are in other places



places attributed to God. But you will say, It may easily be granted, that a man being dead in sinne, he needeth the mighty work of Gods Spirit to raise him up, and to give spiritual life; but doth it follow, that he needeth the same spirit to establish and assure him of Gods love? Yes, no doubt but that the same Spirit of God, which bringeth thee out of the gulf of thy lusts, must also out of the gulf of thy doubts and fears. It's as impossible for thee to have comfort of thy self, as grace of thy self; And therefore you see the Scripture speaking of this twofold operation of Gods Spirit, as being necessary to antidote against our twofold corruption: and the grounds of this necessity of Gods Spirit are these.

First, *The heart of a man is naturally opposite to any thing that is spirituall:* Whatsoever is of God, though never so desirable in it self, yet meeting with our corrupt natures, it findeth opposition; therefore we cannot of our selves any more receive the promises, though infinitely needing of them, then we can obey the commands: We cannot endure honey any more then gall; The way of Gospel-joy is contrary to a troubled heart, as well as Gospel-obedience to a secure carnal heart.

Reasons why  
it is the spirit  
alone that  
thus sealeth us

Secondly, We need the Spirit of God to this *sealing*, because that which doth oppose this, is indeed nothing but the fruit of sinne running down another channel: He that once lived in divers pleasures, did continually grieve the holy Spirit of God; Let this man finde the guilt of sinne; Let the Law wound and sting him, then he grieveth the comforting spirit of God by fears and doubts: No wonder then, if it must be Gods Spirit only that *sealeth*, because that alone can remove the guilt within thee, that only can take off these objections, these discouragements that are upon the soul: As God raised an East-winde that suddenly delivered Pharaoh from those Locusts that molested him: (this was miraculous, none could do it but God) so it is the Spirit of God that alone can take off the heavy burthen of sinne upon thee: It is Gods Spirit alone that can overrule thy conscience, that can pacifie it, that can comfort it: It is the Spirit of Adoption that maketh us cry, *Abba, Father*; but more of this may come in afterwards.





## SERM. CXXXV.

*A further Discovery of the Spirits sealing the  
People of God.*

2 COR. 1.22.

*Who hath also sealed us.*

This sealing of  
Gods spirit is  
in the hearts  
of the sancti-  
fied.

**T**He third particular in the Description of the *Spirits sealing*, cometh to be considered, and that is the subject thereof, which is two-fold,

1. Of *Inhesion*. And
2. Of *Predication*.

First, Of *Inhesion*; so it is said to be the *work of Gods Spirit upon the hearts of the godly*. For after this manner the Scripture speaketh, *He hath sent his Spirit into our hearts*, Gal. 4. 6. And in this Text, *He hath given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts*. By this expression is denoted that deep, radical and full possession, which the *Spirit of God* hath upon the hearts of true believers. So that hereby is excluded that vanishing and superficial perswasion, which may be in a temporary believer, of his interest in Christ. As a temporary believer hath something like true faith, like true joy, and like true grace upon the soul: so he hath also something like this *sealing*, and like this assured perswasion upon his heart. Therefore as the former is much disputed, and it doth greatly exercise tender hearts, viz. How they may know when they are carried on in the work of sanctification, beyond those inchoate and imperfect workings, which an hypocrite may have: so this latter also doth cause great solicitude and care of spirit in many gracious souls. How shall they know their assurance is not a delusion, is not a false perswasion arising out of an inordinate love to their own selves? For the Devil doth not only transform himself into an Angel of light, as light is taken for holiness; but also as it is taken for comfort. Now amongst other characteristical differences, this is one, the perswasion of a godly man is more full, plenary and powerfull. Even as sanctifying grace entereth efficaciously into the heart, so also doth this *sealing grace*; whereas what hypocrites feel is in a confused general and flashy way; neither is it drawn out upon permanent and enduring motives. Although doctrinal characters given by the most able Ministers of the Gospel, are not enough to make us find out this difference in our selves, without a rectified constitution of the powers of the soul within, unlesse we attain to that qualification spoken of by the Apostle, Heb. 5. 14. who by reason of *use or habit, or perfection*, as the word may be rendred, *have their senses exercised to discern between good and evil*. This Text is much to be pressed upon you. For it is not every godly man at first that can separate the precious from the vile in his soul; but there must be an habitual use of the senses this way. Where mark also the Apostle attributeth to the soul,



soul *αισθησις*, in a metaphorical manner: That as the taste, when well constituted, is able to discern between bitter and sweet; the eye between white and black, the ear between what is melodious, and what is harsh and displeasing: Thus the soul of a godly man, being used to heavenly and spiritual things, can know what is of God, and what is of Satan, or of nature in him. For you must know, there may be four principles of operations in us.

1. *Nature*, and that when polished with education, and moral principles, may appear very glorious.

2. *Satan*, insinuating himself as a subtil Serpent, as an Angel of light, imitating the works of God, though he cannot efficaciously work the heart to any thing; all that he doth is by suggestion, and moving the imaginative and sensitive part of a man.

3. There is the *Spirit of God*, and that worketh in use either in a common way by gifts and assistance, or by a sanctifying way. Now is there not required much spiritual skill and experience to discern which is which of all these? So that it is no wonder, if he require these senses to be exercised *γυμνασθεα*, a word from those who did exercise themselves in the *Heathenish* games, and that naked, thereby to fit and prepare themselves to be more agile, and expedite for that service. In this dispute therefore, enquire not onely for doctrinal symptoms, and signs of this *sealing of Gods Spirit*, but heartily pray for these *exercised senses* in spiritual things. The other subject is, the subject of predication, of whom it is affirmed, that they have this *sealing of Gods Spirit*, and that is *sanctified persons*. We speak of *adult persons*; for it is plain, that infants, though they may be sanctified, yet because not having actual faith, they neither have this *sealing*. And if you ask, Have all the *sanctified persons* of God this *sealing*? Have none the *sanctification of the Spirit*, but they must also have the *witnessing of the Spirit*? I answer this Question, because of great practical importance, shall (God assisting) be handled by it self, after the description hath been explained. That which I shall here take notice of, is, That *sanctification* is necessarily presupposed to this *sealing*. A great Prince will not set his seal to dung, to make an impression there; neither will God to an heart unsanctified. For as in matter of Doctrine, God will not vouchsafe miracles to confirm that which is a lie; neither in practicals will the Spirit of God witness to that heart, which is not made holy. For indeed it should witness a lie in such a case, informing such they are the *sonnes of God*, when indeed they are the children of the Devil. This order of Gods Spirits first *sanctifying*, and then *sealing* is clear, *Ephes. 1. 13. In whom after ye believed ye were sealed.* Those eminent Divines, who defined faith to be assurance, making it the same with the *sealing of Gods Spirit*, are gravelled at this Text, and therefore make this Objection, If faith be assurance, be the *sealing*, how doth the Text say, *After we believed, we were sealed.* To this therefore *Piscator* answereth, not yeelding that the word *μετ' ουτως* should be rendred, *Having believed*, as of a thing past, but *believing*, as in the present: but there is too much forcing in this interpretation. Others; they consider of *faith*, as it hath two parts, *Illumination of minde*, and *fiducial assurance*. Now (say they) the Apostle meaneth by faith, the former work of faith; and so the meaning is, After you were enlightned to know the truth, you were confirmed and assured: but that opinion making faith justifying to be an assurance, that Christ is mine, is justly refused. It is plain then, that when the *Spirit of God* hath in order of nature (for in time they may be both together) sanctified a man throughout, whereby he is made a *new creature*, then the *Spirit of God*, maketh this glorious stamp upon him, then he giveth him this *seal*, as an honorable priviledge, whereby he may know himself to be the Lords. Even as in antiquity, none might have *seals*, but persons of honour and dignity. So that



the natural and unregenerate person is to stand aloof off; thou hast nothing to do in this privilege; thou art not the man, whom the great King of Heaven and earth, doth purpose thus to honour.

4. It confirms and establisheth the heart.

We proceed in the Description, and there we meet with the *formal Nature* of it, wherein it doth essentially consist with the object thereof. The Nature of it is, *In confirming and establishing the heart of a man.* For this is the chief and usual end of seals, to ratify a thing, and to make it no longer uncertain and doubtfull: And to this property doth the Scripture chiefly attend. For whereas the soul, though sanctified, is apt to be in daily fears and doubts, about Gods favour and grace towards it; it fluctuateth up and down, having no substancy; the Spirit of God cometh and consolidateth the soul, inabling it to rest satisfied in this, that God is his God, that his sinnes are pardoned, that he is become a reconciled Father in Christ. And if you say, Why do we not need the Spirit of God to do this? Cannot we by our graces, by our repentance and holy life, sufficiently establish our own souls in peace? No, by no means; we need the Spirit of God to comfort, as you heard, as well as to sanctifie; and that for these Reasons,

Reasons why we cannot confirm our selves.

1.

First, *It is very hard for a man, whose guilty conscience doth presse him and condemn him daily, telling him, that he hath deserved at Gods hands to be eternally tormented in hell; not to thinke, because God may doe thus, that therefore he will do so.* In such terrours and affrights we look more to what we have deserved, we look more to what God may do, then what he will: we are naturally suspicious, and think the worst of God, even as we doe of man. If we have offended a man greatly, and it lieth in his power to undo us, we are never quiet, we cannot but think, when ever the opportunity is, he will be avenged, and therefore we dare not trust him. Yea though we have given no just cause, if others have taken up an unkind spirit towards us, we expect nothing else from them, but our ruine, when it is in their power. Therefore for all *Saul's* tears and good works to *David*, yet he would never trust him. Now although there be no cause for us to have such suspicious thoughts about God; for he hath graciously promised that he will receive us: inso much as not to believe him herein, is to give more credit to a man, whose words many times satisfie us, than to God, who is truth it self: yet the heart being guilty and full of fears doth work in this doubtfull manner about God. How hard is it to bring the afflicted sinner to good perswasions about God, and that though by promises, and other wayes God hath so abundantly provided against such distrust? Here then is the reason, why we need the *sealing of Gods Spirit*, we cannot perswade our selves but God will doe what he may do, and what we have deserved. And

2.

A second Reason followeth upon the former, *We can hardly be perswaded, that the great and good things which we stand in need of, God will ever bestow upon us, who are so unworthy of them.* Can a beggars daughter be perswaded, that a great King will marry her? But here is a farre greater disproportion. What will the great God of Heaven, so holy, so full of majesty, look graciously upon me, and not only forgive me my sinnes, but advance me to eternal glory? These things are very improbable. Shall *Joseph* be freed not only from the prison, but promoted to the greatest honour in the Land, next to the King? Who would have believed it? And thus it is here; the soul having low and humble thoughts of it self, cannot be perswaded, that the great God of Heaven will look upon such despicable wretches as they are.

3.

3. *The way of evangelical confidence, with the comfortable effects thereof, are wholly supernatural.* And therefore no wonder, if we need the Spirit of God to help us therein. Not only holiness and grace is *supernatural*, but assurance and joy are likewise *supernatural*. As we cannot pray without the Spirit helping our infirmities; so neither are we able to call God *Father*. If faith in Christ, by



by which we are justified be *supernatural*, then also is the comfort and peace flowing from the knowledge thereof. As the Doctrine of the Gospel is by divine revelation, flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto us, that Christ is the Sonne of God: so neither can flesh and blood enable us to the perswasion of this Mediator, as loving me, and giving himself for me. Certainly, if it be the gift of God, to have a dogmatical faith, to be kept from heretic: it's no lesse to have this fiducial application with the sense thereof upon our souls. Wonder not then, if we make it the Spirits worke to have this assurance.

4. *We need the Spirit to confirm us, because the flesh within us, is full of objections, and bringeth many plausible arguments against it.* Intomuch that what Bellarmine and other subtil Papists bring as Engines to demolish this foundation, are very sutable to the corrupt heart. For they think, the heart is very deceitfull, there is much hypocrisie; I may think I do that for God, which I do for vain-glory; that I am humbled for sinne, when worldly motives only afflict me. Again, flesh doth doth suggest, there may be much unknown evil in thee, thy heart may be worse than thou takest it to be. Though the Sea seeme calme sometimes, yet there are dangerous Rocks under the water: and thus though outwardly there may appear much tenderesse, yet there may be a rock in the bottome. Furthermore, the flesh may suggest, Wilt thou be perswaded of Gods favour to thee in particular? Is not this to enter into Gods secrets? Is not this to climb up into Heaven in an arrogant manner? Yea, is not this the way to nourish security in thee, and make thee presume of Gods favour, though thy iniquities be never so many and grosse? Lastly, The flesh telleth thee of former sins, thou didst once wallow in, as also the present failings, that thy own soul doth frequently condemn thee for. Now are not these very plausible? Do they not impor une to diffidence? And certainly these would overwhelme thee, did not the Spirit of God overcome all, and support thee against them. Yea

5. *We need the Spirit of God to seal us, because the Devil is very busie and active in destroying this perswasion.* He knoweth that those who enjoy this priviledge, walk with joy, peace, thankfulness, with strength and activity in the wayes of God; therefore to weaken them herein, that their graces may wither, he tempteth about their comforts, that they may wither: thus the Devil as he opposeth the Spirit of God in its holiness, called therefore the *unclean spirit*; so he doth also in its comforting effects, and therefore is called the *tempter*. Yea 2 Cor. 2. we reade how active he was to have the *incestuous person* humbled for his sinnes, even *swallowed up with too much sorrow*. And do not many of Gods people feel this experimentally? Doe they not see they should sink and fall into all horror and despair, did not the Spirit of God support? Little doe the natural men of the world apprehend what the agonies and spiritual conflicts are, which a tempted soul endureth in this case.

Lastly, *The Spirit of God must seal us, because this assurance is not obtained in a natural way, as if we had perfectly obeyed the will of God, and therefore we merited pardon; but it is by the gracious promises of God made to a believer, though accompanied with infirmities.* Indeed if it were thus, that we could purge out all sinne from our selves, and be perfect in every good work, then assurance would naturally follow: as the Saints in Heaven, because cleansed from all sinne, cannot doubt of Gods favour: but our establishment is more upon the promises of grace without us, than any thing that is within us; while we behold our own unworthinesse, and are deeply humbled under it, yet even then are we enabled to assure our selves of the grace of God towards us.





## SERM. CXXXVI.

## Of the Object, Manner and End of the Spirits sealing.

2 COR. I. 22.

Who hath also sealed us.

The Spirit  
seals the pro-  
mises of grace  
to a believer.

THE next particular considerable in this Description of the *Spirits sealing*, is the Object about which it is conversant, and that is said to be the *Promises of Grace*, as belonging to a sanctified person in particular; and herein doth the most expresse and efficacious effect of this *sealing* appear, that it particularizeth the *Promises of grace*; what is spoken generally, that it doth bring home in a peculiar manner to our own breast. What is it to hear of health, if it be not thy health? What of wealth, if not thy wealth? So what comfort is it to hear of a Christ, if not thy Christ? To know there are blessed and precious promises, if they doe not belong to thee? Doe not the Devils know in the general, that Christ is a Saviour, that there are excellent promises declared in the Word? But they are miserable and wretched howsoever, because not applicable unto them.

The division  
of faith as to  
the object, it is  
1. General.

We may therefore divide *Faith* according to the object thereof.

First, Into a *general Faith*, whereby we are carried out to believe the whole word of God upon a divine motive, whether it be the historical or comminatory part, as well as the promissory. Thus whatsoever is revealed in the Scripture, though it be but an appendix to any History, as that *Sauls father b. d. asses*, though we cannot call it an Article of the faith, yet when sufficiently propounded to us, then not to believe, argueth a wicked, and an obstinate spirit, because we despise the authority of God, and his testimony in that particular, though but little.

2. Special.

Secondly, There is a *special Faith*, and that I call, *The worke of Gods grace* (for all faith is the gift of God) whereby a man is enabled to believe the promissory part in the Scripture, whereby he believeth this truth, that *Jesus Christ is a Saviour to those that believe in him*. And this the Papists, yea and others too, make all the faith that is required of us; that this is it, which doth justifie us; but very absurdly.

3. Particular.

Thirdly, There is a *particular Faith*, and that is, *When the Spirit of God doth enable us to receive Christ as our Christ, to apply the promises as belonging to us in particular*. To say with *Thomas*, *My Lord, my God*: And with *Paul*, *Galat. 2. Who loved me, and gave himself for me*. Such a particular faith is not onely possible, but a duty, of which much excellent and profitable Discourse might be made; but I forbear, because I am to treat of it (God assisting) upon another account. Therefore for the present



present, you are to know, that this worke of Gods Spirit in *confirming* and *sealing* of us, is especially manifested in this particular, and appropriating way of the promises of grace, as our portion. Therefore it is said to *cause us to call God Father*; which implieth, our peculiar interest and propriety in him. Doe not then be discouraged from this *Canaan*, because of the *Anakims* that are in the way. Fear not to call God thy Father, though thou findest many discouragements within thee. The Devil would not have the taste of this honey.

But I proceed; and the next particular in the Description, is the *Manner*, how the Spirit of God cometh thus to witnesse unto us, how we come to be sealed, and that is said to be,

How the Spirit seals, even by the means that God hath appointed.

First, *By the meanes God hath appointed thereunto*. This is very observable; for hereby this gracious worke of God is differenced from all Enthusiastical delusions; or from those propheticall extasies, which the Prophets of God sometimes did partake off from that rapture *Paul* was in, when he said, *Whether he was in the body, or out of the body, he did not know*. No, we are not to expect such immediate operations of the Spirit upon us, where the Spirit shall be both the efficient cause, and the object also. Neither may we hearken after some voice of Gods Spirit, or immediate testimony within, saying to us, as sometimes a voice spake to Christ, *This is my beloved Sonne*. We may not expect, that Christ should say to thee after some visible manner, as he did to *Mary Magdalen*, *Be of good comfort, thy sinnes are forgiven thee*. We are not to hearken to such Doctrines that may presse for such a witnessing; but we must give care to what the Spirit of God speaketh in the Scripture, and so expect to have this confirmation and sealing, *by those meanes which he hath appointed*. Even as it is in the Doctrine of the Scripture; it is the Spirit of God that doth fully assure the hearts of believers, that it is Gods word. But how doth it thus perswade the soul? Not by any immediate testimony, but by these implanted arguments therein, as the holinesse of the matter, the majesty of the style, &c. by which this undoubted perswasion is wrought in us. Thus it is in this worke of sealing; the Spirit of God, though it be the efficient cause of it, yet it is in such an order and way, as he *hath appointed*. For we must not thinke, that it is suitable to the workings of Gods Spirit, that we should have a blinde perswasion in us, whereby we are assured; onely we know not why, and we are not able to give any reason, that we are assured, but because we are assured. The Spirit of God attemperateth its operations to our rational nature.

But what are those meanes and wayes whereby the holy Spirit doth thus assure us? They are either *External*, or *Internal*. *External* are twofold:

Which means are either external, as  
1. The Sacraments.

First, *By the Sacraments* in the right use of them, the Spirit of God doth assure us. Hence you heard, the *Sacraments* are called *seales*; neither may we thinke that Christ hath appointed these Ordinances in a barren, formal, and empty manner. No, God will accompany his owne Ordinance to the right receiver; and therefore as truly, as he received the bread and wine, so truly is he also made partaker of Christs body and blood. Whereas then the promises are indefinitely propounded, the Sacraments they are particular applied, and by these the Spirit of God doth assure us of our interest in the promises.

Secondly, Another *External way*, is, *By those notes and markes which are given of such, to whom the promises doe belong*. The Scripture doth not onely declare the promises, but characterizeth the persons to whom they doe infallibly belong. Insomuch that he who findeth, he doth truly.

2. By the marks of such to whom the promises belong.



ly beleve and repent. He that findeth he is made a new creature, \* such an one may as undoubtedly conclude, being enabled thereunto by the Spirit of God, that the promises doe in particular belong to him, as if he were named, as if it were said, *Thou Thomas*, and *Thou John*, *thou art received into the favour of God*. So that this particular doth evacuate all those boasts and confidences which many may have of Gods love towards them, seeing the marks and signs are not applicable unto them, which the promises do require. But these I call *External*.

Or else internal.

There are *Internal Qualifications*, by which the Spirit of God doth thus perswade and assure us, not that they are a cause, or that we are to put confidence in them, but by them as signes and effects of Gods gracious love, we come to be assured of the love it selfe: As by the Rain-bow, we come to be assured, that God will not drowne the world again.

I shall not enlarge upon these, having had opportunity from some passages in this Chapter to speak thereunto.

The signes whereby we may know the Spirit witnesses our interest in the promises.

1. The sanctified improvement of afflictions.

The first particular signe or marke by which the Spirit of God doth interest or seale unto, that I shall instance in, is, *The sanctified and savoury improvement of afflictions*. Such as are chastened from the Lord, and taught by him, these may unquestionably conclude Gods special love towards them. *Hebr. 12. Revel. 3.* The Scripture doth in those places abundantly evidence, that whosoever is a sonne of God, is afflicted by him: Inso-much that he who hath no chastisements, is to thinke that he is a bastard, and not a sonne. Now this is not to be understood of afflictions themselves meerly as so, but as sanctified, as working to our spirituall good. And when they have this blessed fruit, it is as comfortable an argument, to be assured of Gods grace towards us, as any may be thought on. The Apostle maketh this a sure effect of Predestination, *Romans 8. 26.* *He did also predestinate us to be conformed to the image of his Sonne*, which is partly in suffering, as he did, that so we might be glorified, as he was. Look then with a more comfortable face upon afflictions, than thou hast done. Doe not flie from them with fear, as *Moses* from his Rod, when turned into a Serpent. For when these doe worke to thy spiritual good; when they are like fire to make the gold lesse drossie; when they are like winnowing, to purge the wheat from its chaffe; then know, this is an assured testimony of Gods favour. Thou needest not say, Who will goe up into Heaven? What messenger will come immediately from God to perswade my soule of Gods favour towards me? For the testimony is on earth, it is neare thee, doe not cast thy eyes from it.

2. The experience of Gods gracious presence with us.

Secondly, A second signe or meanes, by which we come to this sealing, is, *The observation and experience of Gods gracious presence in us, and with us, whereby we are preserved from some, and kept either from, or in such temptations, that might have undone us.* When we finde that grace accompanying of us, which *David* prayed for, *Psalme 19.* to keep us back from sinning. As the childe of God hath the Angels of Heaven, to take care of him; they have it in charge, to hold him (as it were) in their armes, as a Nurse doth her little childe: so is he also inwardly fortified by inherent grace, to keepe him in his wayes to Heaven, he hath habitual grace, and actual grace, and he hath preventing grace, and co-operating, he hath exciting and persevering grace. Now that man who observeth how richly and mercifully the grace of God putteth it selfe forth in these several effects; how often, when he is ready to goe astray, the grace of God seeketh him out; how often grace prevented and excited



ted him, else he had beene swallowed up in such deepe gulphs of sinne; he (I say) that findeth such preventng, concomitant, and subsequent grace of God; he that findeth this Rock Christ to follow him with gracious effects (as some say) the waters out of the Rock followed the people of *Israel* in the wilderness to refresh them; this man may say, verily God is here, verily God is with me.

3. The antecedent works of sanctification.

Lastly, The Spirit of God doth give us *Consolation*, by the antecedent *workes of sanctification*, Rom. 8. 9. *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* But the godly they have received the Spirit of God. And if the soul, which is the spirit of a man, manifest it self present in the body by its operations; shall we not much rather thinke, that the Spirit of Christ, where it dwelleth, in a man, will make knowne it selfe? Shall we have these coales of fire in our bosome, and not perceive them?

Now there is an order in the works of Gods Spirit, which we also must attend unto, and not think to have one before the other. The order is this, the Spirit of God doth

1. *Enlighten the minde.*

2. *It doth sanctifie the will and affections.*

3. *It doth witnesse and seale to us these blessed effects.* To looke therefore for consolation before sanctification, is preposterous. Oh how happy is it, when the childe of God earnestly seeketh after all these effects upon his soule, and that in the order God hath appointed! These few qualifications may suffice; by these and the like the Spirit of God doth confirme. Onely you must know, these doe but objectively offer themselves, if the Spirit of God doth not rightly constitute our inward man, and enable us, all these blessed effects may be upon our soules, and yet we be disconsolate, as if we had them not. Even as there may be pleasant flowers in a garden, yet if we have not light, we cannot see them. So that the cause of assurance is more from the Spirit of God efficiently establishing the heart, than from these qualifications, which doe objectively onely declare themselves: Even as in faith dogmatically assenting to divine truths, the work of Gods Spirit is more upon the understanding, giving firmnesse and stedfast adhesion, than upon the motives of credibility in the truths themselves. But what is necessary to a fuller clearing of this, will upon another occasion be considered.

Of the end of the spirits sealing, even that we might live godly and thankfully.

I proceed to the last thing in this Description, and that is, the *final cause*, which is, *That under the sense of this we might live boldly*, &c. I say, *under this sense*. For this sealing of Gods Spirit, doth make such a divine impression upon the soule, that we feele it, and perceive it not indeed bodily, as we doe the fire that burneth, but rationally and spiritually in our inward man. So that not onely grace is from Gods Spirit; but the experimental feeling of it, is likewise from the same. Hence it is not to be called an humane, but divine sense. For a gracious constitution is required to feele what is grace, and to discern the effects thereof. But I hasten.

This sense and apprehension of Gods sealing being thus experimentally in us, we find a three-fold advantage thereby.

First, We walke boldly, confidently: Inasmuch that we can cry *Father*, Ephes. 3. 12. *We have boldnesse and acceſſe with confidence.* There is *απαρρησία*, *We are able to speake any thing in the presence of God*; whereas in fears and doubts our prayers are interrupted, we question whether we may say this or that.



Secondly, *Hereby we walke comfortably* : Yea, it is called, *joy unspeakable*, 1 Pet. 1.8. and Rom. 14. 17. *Peace and joy in the Holy Ghost*. The Kingdome of God is there said to consist in this. Alas, how contrary doe the people of God walke to this Text, for want of sealing, as if godlinesse lay in doubts, in fears, and dejections of spirit? Surely the people of God are to bewail their ignorance and low principles in these things. Thou makest thy self to be like an heire under age, as the Apostle alludeth, Gal. 4.1. and so not differing from a servant; whereas the Gospel-light and Evangelical principles set home by the Spirit of adoption, should fill thee with liberty and exceeding great joy.

Lastly, *Hereby we also live thankfully*, never satisfying our selves with admiring, and commending the unspeakable and unsearchable riches of Gods grace. Two great gulphs the Spirit of God hath delivered thee out of; the sinfull lusts and corruptions thou didst once wallow in; and the slavish, sad, tormenting feares thou wast once almost overwhelmed with. Oh what cause is here of *thankfullnesse*! How sorry art thou that thou art no more enlarged? That thou hast but one heart, and one tongue to be exercised in this matter? And the aggravation of all this is, that we may be thus bold, joyfull and thankfull, notwithstanding all discouragements to the contrary; for they are many and dreadfull. How many failings within? How many temptations without? What fiery darts from Satan? And yet a sealed Christian is able to looke upon these with as much joy, as the Israelites did upon the *Egyptian* carcasses, that lay dead upon the Seashore. But if God should let open these flood-gates upon the most sanctified person, he would be immediately swallowed up with them, as *Dathan* and *Abiram* were suddenly in the earth. And then

Lastly, You have the terme till which this *sealing* shall last, and that is, *Till we are made happy compleatly in Heaven*. So Ephes. 4. 30. *We are sealed, till the day of redemption*. This way of faith and assurance will then cease, it will be turned into the immediate vision and fruition of God: Then there will be no feares, no doubts, any more than lusts and corruptions. How mercifull then is God, that giveth us such manna in the wilderness, which will cease when we come into *Canaan*?





## SERM. CXXXVII.

*Whether all the People of God are his Sealed ones?*

2 COR. I. 21.

*Who hath also sealed us.*

**T**He nature of this *sealing* being largely described, I shall conclude with an answer to that Question, *Whether all sanctified ones are Gods sealed ones?* for it might seem to be true of all, seeing the *Apostle* speaketh universally in the person of beleevers, who hath sealed us; and *Eph. 1. 13. those that beleeved were sealed*: there is no difference made, neither are any exempted. And not only by Scripture, but by the testimony of many learned Protestants it should also seem so, especially of such who defined *faith* to be an *assurance*; for then, if no assurance, no faith. To this purpose *Calvin* seemeth to speak on this very Text, which *Stapleton* looketh upon as depraving the meaning of the *Apostle*. *Whosoever saith Calvin, hath not the spirit of God a witnesse within him, so that he can say Amen to God calling him to the certain hope of salvation; he doth talso Christianum nomen obtendere, pretend only to a Christian name; not being so indeed.* To the same sense also in his *Institutions*, lib. 3. cap. 2. par. 16. *Vere fidelis non est, &c. he is not truly a beleever who is not perswaded with a solid perswasion, that God is a propitious and reconciled Father to him, whereby he doth promise to himself all things from his bounty.* By these passages you would think, that unlesse a man hath this *assurance* that he is not truly godly, yea, that the very difference between an hypocrite and a true beleever lyeth in this particular about a solid perswasion of Gods love in Christ. Then on the other side, if you do consult with the experiences of these whom we have cause to judge truly godly, we shall meet with few that say they have this sealing. They have good hopes (they will tell you) in the favour of God, and sometimes they finde such supports of soul, that they walk with much peace and comfort; but to say that they have ordinarily this *sealing* of Gods Spirit, that they dare not, what then shall be answered to the Objection? I shall not in this place enlarge on it, only I shall speak some things to satisfie the doubting soul in this Point.

Whether all  
Gods people  
be his sealed  
ones.

And first, *You are to know, That this priviledge of sealing is spoken of in the Scripture as belonging to all the godly.* There is none excluded: It is the duty of every one to endeavour after it, to make all diligence in prayer, and in other means to obtain it. We are not to conceive, as *Papists* do, that some may have it by a speciall revelation, as *Paul*, and other eminent Saints, although we grant, that whosoever hath this *sealing*, hath it by a speciall revelation, but not in the *Popish* sense. that is, the Spirit of God doth in a special manner evidende unto a beleever, by the fruits of faith, that he doth belong unto Christ. This *sealing* then the Scripture speaketh of as a mercy vouch-

1. It belongs  
to all the  
godly.



safed to every sanctified person, at least, that he may be made partaker of it: for not only the Texts fore-mentioned, but that also *Gal. 4.6.* do h demonstrate this truth; *Because ye are Sons. he hath sent the Spirit of Adoption into your hearts: Because you are Sonnes,* now a *quatenus ad omne valet consequentia*, is a known Rule: and *Rom. 8.* The Apostle speaketh generally, *The Spirit witnesseth with our spirits, that we are the Sonnes of God.* You are not then to think that this admirable favour is destined only for some choice servants of God: No, this scepter is held out to every beleever, such honour all his Saints may have.

2. Primitive Christians did more partake of it then Christians do now.

But yet in the second place, *It is no wonder, if the primitive Christians, who lived in the Apostolical daies, did partake of it more powerfully and plentifully then believers generally do in this latter age.* The Apostle in his Epistles might speak of this sealing as partaked of by all, because then believers had a greater measure, not only of extraordinary gifts (many of them I mean) but also of the sanctifying graces of Gods spirit; They lived up to higher degrees of fervency, of zeal, of heavenly-mindednesse, then ordinarily we do. Again, their conversion was more eminent and remarkable, and that by the Apostolical Ministry, which was accompanied by signs and wonderful miracles; so that as their dogmaticall faith had greater means to heighten it then ours, so likewise their salvificall and speciall faith. They were wonderfully converted from *Gentilism*, both from idolatry and prophanenesse, whereby their change was the greater, and so were more sensible of Gods Spirit working upon them. Lastly, They were exposed to great persecutions, they lived under constant tribulations, there were no outward encouragements for them. Now its Gods way to vouchsafe this inward comfort and peace most to those that are bereaved of all outward. Thus the Martyrs even in these latter daies, did in a great measure enjoy this Sealing of Gods spirit; else they could not have been carried through those bitter trials with such unspeakable joy and consolation, as they were. These things considered, no wonder if the primitive Christians might have an higher measure of this sealing then we have; although it must be confessed, that even in those daies there were many hypocrites, and several temporary believers, who had only vanishing apprehensions in these great things, not solid perswasions.

3. It is not so necessary to happinesse as sanctification.

Thirdly, *Although this sealing be propounded in the Scripture as common to all, yet it is not of the same absolute connexion with eternal happinesse, as sanctification is, without helmesse no man shall see God: without this sealing a man may; Inasmuch that the promises of pardon and glory are not made to this assurance and consolation, but to grace and holinesse.* It is not said, Thou shalt not be saved, unless thou have this; for if it were so, then many of Gods Children had cause to be greatly amazed, but it is not in the same way of necessity as sanctification is. Seeing therefore it is more than a temporall mercy, and yet not so high as an absolute spirituall mercy to salvation; it is to be reckoned in the number of such mercies that are spirituall, but yet not of peremptory necessity; such are degrees of grace: These are promised to the godly; but not as absolutely necessary, for then all believers should be equally godly: but they are distributed according to the wisdom of God. Thus it is also in this matter of sealing.

4. Sealing doth not follow sanctification of necessity, but by Gods appointment.

Hence in the fourth place, *Sealing doth not follow sanctification as a naturall, necessary property, but by divine appointment and order.* It is not as when there is fire, there must necessarily be heat; or as when there is the Sun, there might be light, only God hath appointed such an order. There is a great aptnesse and fitness, for sealing to follow sanctifying. Hence it is commonly Gods way, to make one follow the other, but yet this chain may sometime be broken; if God sometimes hinder naturall agents from their effects, as when the fire



fire did not burn the bodies of the three Worthies. No wonder, if in meer positive and instituted waies of God, sometimes there may be an interruption made, so that experience doth unquestionably demonstrate this, that many truly sanctified ones may yet for a season at least want this *sealing*; yea, go bowed down and afflicted with thoughts quite contrary, as if they had received the spirit of bondage only: Their love is so farre from casting out tormenting feare, that their slavish fears do cast out Evangelical love. But how may this honey-comb cease to drop? how may this Conduit of wine come to be stopped? I answer.

First, *On Gods part, for some speciall and peculiar reasons not known to us always.* The Lord hath wise and just reasons to leave his people in darknesse; To bring them into the Whales belly, as it were, out of which they cannot find any escape. It was thus with Christ his only begotten Sonne, that he might accomplish the bitter work of redemption for us, he was left to those strong agonies and fears, the Scripture speaketh of; he had not consolation nor joy, when he cried out, *My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?* his enemies gave him gall to drink, and his soul tasted of gall within: his enemies set a crown of thorns upon his head, and he had sharp thorns in his heart, in so much that an Angel was sent to comfort him. This might make us wonder, that God should not spare his own Sonne, but it was necessary for our redemption: for as he could not have wrought our reconciliation for us, unlesse he had a passible body that could suffer death; so neither unlesse he had a suffering soul by fears and grief, though all without sinne. It was *Jobs* case likewise to be without *sealing*, for he could have no comfort in his heart, while he complained, the Arrows of the Almighty did stick fast in him; while he was terrified with dreams and visions in the night. Thus the Lord still doth exercise his sovereignty therein, he withdraweth the light of his favour from many choice sanctified ones; They wander in a wilderness, their lives are a burthen to them, they cannot meet God in any ordinance, as if they were become like so many rejected *Sauls*, when yet the favour of the Lord is exceeding great to them, only they perceive it not.

But then secondly, *On our part many times, yea, too often when the cause is, that we have not this sealing.* We may thank our selves for bloaching the Paper so, that no comfortable thing can be written upon it. I shall instance in one or two waies, how we come to keep off this sealing.

And the first is. *by falling into some grievous and grosse sinnes*; if such do drive away the naturall peace of a meer natural conscience, as is plain in heathens, how much more the supernaturall peace of a tender enlightened conscience? *Dauids* penitentiall Psalm 51. doth fully speak to this; he there complained of his broken bones, he prayeth to *have joy restored to him*; all which argueth, that by sinne he had lost all comfortable enjoyment of God; That he was in a chaos and dark confusion: and truly if there were no hell, no damnation to threaten the people of God with, to keep them from grosse sinnes: This of Gods iron turnace to be cast into, is enough to make our hearts tremble. Oh the wofull condition that godly man is in, who instead of the spirit of Adoption he once enjoyed, is now delivered up to Satan, to be under his fears, his black temptations; No outward comfort in the world can then give him a drop of ease. Oh then come not near any grosse sinnes, fly from the appearance of it, for this *sealing* cannot consist with that.

Secondly, *Any carelesse and remisse walking*, though we do not fall into grosse sins, is enough to put this Sunne into an Eclipse: Any angry and bitter words to another will do it; Any loose and wanton discourse may bring thee into this deep dungeon: For so you may see, *Eph. 4.30. Grieve not the spirit by which ye are sealed.* But how is that done? for so you may see the verse before

How may this sealing be stoppt.

1. On Gods part, for reasons known to himself.

2. On our part

1. By falling into grosse sins.

2. Carelesse walking.



fore, *by corrupt communications, by unfavoury, gracelesse words*: and then see the subsequent Verse; *Let all bitterness, all wrath and anger be put away*. Dost thou then complain thou hast not this *sealing*? how can it be otherwise? How many frothy, foolish speeches hast thou? How many angry, bitter words come from thee? If you hereby grieve Gods spirit, no wonder that he leave thee to thy grief.

3. Self-confidence.

Thirdly, *By any inward security, and secret self-confidence*, we may deprive our selves of this *sealing*. For seeing this is a Gospel-privilege, a ray from the Sunne of righteousness, it is only conveyed in an Evangelicall method: Now all Gospel-dispensations are to the broken in heart, to the poor in spirit, to the humbled sinner, renouncing all righteousness and worth of our own; so that as it is in the work of sanctification, no sooner hath a man any secret confidence in his own power, but sanctifying grace in some measure leaveth him: As we see in *Peter*, when he said, *Though all men should forsake Christ, yet he would not*. Thus it is also in the way of consolation, no sooner doth a man begin to be lifted up within, because he hath these comfortable refreshments, but presently they are subtracted from us. Thus *David* did but say, *his mountain was established that he should not be moved*; and immediately *God hid his face, and he was troubled*, Psa 30.6,7. Therefore that man who would enjoy this desirable privilege, must walk with a tender, humble, and yet an Evangelicall, fiducial frame of heart.

4. This sealing doth not exclude all doubts.

Fourthly, When we speak of Gods *sealing*, you must rightly understand the meaning of it; *It is not as if thereby such a certainty were wrought in the soul, that it doth exclude all fears and doubts*. No, that is a proper privilege to heaven: as the flesh lusteth against the spirit in matter of sanctification, so it doth also in consolation. As therefore when the spirit of God sanctifieth on the spirits part, grace is pure and perfect, but on the subjects part which doth receive it; so it hath much drosse and imperfection cleaving to it. Thus it is also in this *sealing*, though the testimony and witness on the spirits part be infallible and undoubted; yet as we receive it, so there is much unbelief and doubting adhering to us. This *sealing* therefore, and many fears and doubts may consist together, because it is not absolutely predominant and prevalent; only here is a conflict; we are to strive against these doubts, we are to pray against these fears, till the Lord cause light to arise out of this darkness: Therefore the godly may have this *sealing*, and yet not attend to it, nor perceive it, because the corruptions of our heart are most perceived by us, and we are so exercised by them, that we do not consider what the spirit of God doth witness at that time. This then maketh the godly think they have not this *sealing* at all, because they have it not with that dominion, as they desire to exclude all conflicts and troubles within; and so, as in respect of sanctification there is some grace under much corruption, so there is also this certainty under many fears. And if you say, that it is a contradiction, that a man should be assured, and doubt also. I answer, No, no more than that a man should be sanctified, and yet have some corruption in him, for they do not respect the same thing; Certainty ariseth from the Promises of God, set home by his spirit upon us; and fears arise from the sense and feeling of our own weaknesses. So that what the holy Apostle speaketh concerning the work of grace in him, with the opposition therunto, *the good he would do he doth not, and he findes evil present with him*. Thus it is here; the sealing, the assurance, the comfort he would have he cannot obtain, but the doubts and slavish fears which he hateth, they carry him away captive.

5. They that have it not are to submit to God.

Lastly, Suppose a godly man hath not this *sealing*, yet let him not limit God to the times and seasons he would, but leave all to the merciful dispensation of a wise and righteous God. Thou hast not assurance, yet no more thou hast not perfect grace



grace yet, thou hast not perfect holinesse yet, but thou waitest upon the Lord till it be accomplished, and so do here. Oh but I am afraid I shall never have it, I shall dye without it! that is more than thou knowest: how suddenly and graciously doth God use to rebuke these windes and waves, when we little think of it? yet know thy interest to heaven is not shaken: Thou wilt indeed want much comfort, but not thy title to heaven; Thou art as sure to go to heaven, as if thou wert assured of it: And withall remember, that the faith of dependance and recumbency upon Christ only, is more noble than assurance, in that thou givest God most glory. In this thy own interest is satisfied. And lastly know, that heaven is coming to thee, and thou going to it, when not only sin, but all fears shall be removed away; Thou shalt then dispute thy condition no more, thou shalt not then question thy graces, or Gods grace to thee, but shall put on the Crown of glory, never to be molested, and disquieted any more.



## S E R M. CXXXVIII.

### Of Grace, as it is the Earnest of Eternall Glory.

2 COR. I. 22.

*And given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*

**T**His is the third and last similitude, by which that gracious confirmation of beleivers in Gods promises, is declared; and if we consider them relatively to the discourse precedent, we shall easily see, what great reason there is that the promises should not be only *yea and Amen* in themselves, but in us also. Seeing we have this special work of Gods spirit, *anointing, sealing, and giving us an earnest of the things that are promised*. Now, as you heard, though the same priviledge be meant under this threefold similitude, yet every one hath its proper notion; and therefore the earnest here spoken of may differ from *sealing*, thus: That the *sealing* of Gods Spirit doth assure of us that which is already wrought in us, as *seals* confirm contracts that are already made (though hereby also is implied a certain continuance and perseverance in that state, which is sealed;) but the *earnest* spoken of in the text, doth principally relate to the future: So that whereas the childe of God might object, what if I be sealed and assured for the present of my good condition, yet who knoweth what may fall out thereafter? I may apostatize, I may provoke God to leave me, and so this seal be as it were defaced. Bus though the word *sealing* doth also imply continuance, (for it is till the day of redemption) yet the word (*earnest*) doth more properly speak to that Objection; Thou hast the earnest given thee of that inheritance which shall be hereafter.

So that in the words we may take notice of the *mercy* it self, the *efficient cause* of it, and the *subject* receiving it. The *mercy* it self is said to be an earnest; *appearing*;



ἀρραβών: It is used in two other places in the New Testament, as is to be shewed. It is properly an *Hebrew* word, though from the *Hebrews* communicated to the *Phenicians*, which being great Merchants brought it into *Greece*, so that the *Grecians* adopted it for their ordinary word; yea, some Latinists, as *Plautus* and *Terentius* do use it; as *Grotius* on the place affirmeth. *Varro* speaketh of it, *lib. 4. de ling. latinâ.* where he saith, the same mony, for divers respects may be called *dos*, *merces*, *arrabo*, and *corollarium*, and addeth, the word *arrabo* is brought from the *Grecians*; but *Scaliger* in his Notes upon the place correcteth him for that saying, *Ne græcum verbum quidem sed merum Syriacum.* The *Hebrew* root from whence it groweth, is *gnarb*, to *mingle*, and so by a metaphor it signifieth to *buy and sell*, to make contracts, and to assure them by *earnests*; because in this action, the buyer and the seller are as it were mingled together: Some have translated it *pignus*, which the *Grecians* call ἑνός a *pledge*, *pignus*; It is so called either *a pugno*, (say some) because the pledge is delivered by the hand, or else as *Martinus Lexi.* *pignus* from *pago* or *pango*, because in such covenants and contracts there is an agreement established. But *Hierom* of old, and others of late do no waies approve of rendring it a *pledge*, but an *earnest*; for there is this difference in the civil law, between *arra* and *pignus*, an *earnest* and a *pledge*: an *earnest* is part of the price that is to be paid down, and so goeth to make it up; but a *pledge* is given for security by the debtor to the creditor, and taken away again when the debt is paid. Now this metaphor doth no waies hold in this case, for God is not a debtor to us: when he giveth us his grace, he doth not borrow of us; neither when the promise is fulfilled, is this grace taken away; for in heaven grace is not abolished, but perfected. Indeed *Aquinas* upon the place maketh this Observation. *That as a pledge must be (saith he) equivalently worth to the debt, so it is here; grace wrought in us, especially the Spirit of God bestowed upon us, is equivalent to glory.* But that is false, that in our graces [wrought by Gods Spirit, there is an intrinsicall condignity and equality to everlasting glory. It's therefore more proper and suitable to call it an *earnest*, which was commonly used two waies, either in civill commerce or matrimoniall contracts, called therefore in the latter *subarrhatio*: The end and use of it was to secure the full payment of the debt, or fulfilling of any promise made; and in this sense it is true in the Text, God knowing our pronesse to doubt about his promises, as also how uncertain and fearfull we are, doth give us his *grace here* as a *sure earnest* of our eternal happinesse. So that by this *earnest*, we are not to understand extraordinary and miraculatus gifts of Gods Spirit; for many had them who yet never could enter into glory, but the special works of grace sanctifying. These are fitly called an *earnest* (though there be also some dissimilitudes as is to be shewed) inso-much that he who findeth he hath grace here, may certainly conclude he shall have glory hereafter; for though there be some who hold, that some may have true faith, and yet totally fall off, and that only the elected beleever shall persevere, yet that is built upon a sandy foundation.

In the second place, you have the efficient cause of this, and that is *the spirit of God*; Some indeed make this by way of apposition: *The earnest, which is the spirit*; as if the spirit it self, both in this and the other Text, were the *earnest*, which may be received, provided, that by the *spirit* we mean not only the person of the *spirit*, but the gracious operations thereof; for the people of God partake of both, *Eph. 1. 13.* They are said to be *sealed with that holy spirit of promise*, called so, not because it is the *spirit promised*, for that is too frigid, though it be true; but because it is the spirit that doth apply the promises to the soul, and make us assured of them, as he is called the *holy spirit*, because he is the *author of holinesse*: But then *Eph. 4. 30.* there we are said to be *sealed by the spirit*, denoting the spirit of God to be the efficient cause of it:



it: So that it is a blasphemous wresting of the Scripture by a Socinian; when by the holy Ghost thus sealing unto us, is (saith he, *Smal. disp. de promisso spiritus sancti.*) meant no more than a sure hope of eternal life: He denieth the holy Ghost to be God, and a Person, it is only (saith he) a sure hope within us: but this is to confound this effect with the cause: faith, and love, and hope, are the effects of Gods spirit, they are not the spirit it self. So that from hence, viz. because the spirit of God doth seal us, we may gather a sure argument, that he is truly God, for the spirit is said to confirm us, and God is said to confirm us, whereby it is implied, that to confirm our hearts is a divine operation, as well as to sanctifie it. It is true, how the spirit of God is God, and how it proceedeth from the Father and Sonne, cannot be comprehended by reason; It is enough that by faith we are to beleeve so, for no wonder the doctrine of the Trinity is inexplicable, seeing the nature of God is ineffable. To this purpose *Austin* having discoursed about the Trinity, concludeth, that he perceived only he had spoken something of God: *Si autem dixi, non est hoc quod dicere volui hoc unde scio, nisi quia Deus ineffabilis est? Quod autem a me dictum est, si ineffabile esset, non esset dictum, ac per hoc ne ineffabilis quidem dicendus est Deus. quia & hoc cum aicitur, aliquid dicitur, & fit nescio quæ pugna verborum, quoniam si illud est ineffabile quod dici non potest, non est ineffabile, quod velut ineffabile dici potest.* De Doctrinâ Christianâ. lib. 1. But that by the way.

Lastly, Here is the subject wherein, and that is said to be in our hearts: So that as God doth write his Law in our hearts; Thus he doth also infuse his comfort and assurance, which doth demonstrate the sovereign power of God over our hearts, he can make them holy when he pleaseth; he can comfort them when he pleaseth: No Potentate in the world can do thus: That heart of thine which is not in thy own power, which no man can tame, the grace of God can tame it, that heart which thou desirest may be filled with holinesse and consolation; God alone can do it. The Observation is.

*That grace wrought in the heart is a sure earnest of glory hereafter.*

Grace is a sure earnest of glory.

He that is holy here, must needs be happy hereafter. If thou canst finde grace in thy soul, thou hast found the Pearl, thou maist rejoyce, not doubting but heaven will be thine hereafter. The people of God are not only to look upon grace as grace, but as it is an earnest of a greater happinesse: yet how often do the children of God consider it without this respect? what courage, joy, and holy boldnesse would it work in thee, to think thou hast within thee that which assureth of eternal glory, as if thou wert already in heaven? This is a reviving truth, that grace is an earnest of glory, thou mindest grace as it subdueth thy corruptions, as it maketh thy heart to be carried out more holily and delightfully to God, but then thou dost not attend to it as an earnest. There is a great deal of difference between a shilling as a single peece of money, and as an earnest, it may be of twenty pound more to come. Thus it is very much rejoycing to finde grace at all in thy soul, as it is grace; but it doth much more rejoyce as it is an earnest of more fulnesse. *Adam* had grace, the angels had grace, but grace was not given them, as part of an inheritance, for they fell from it,

Let us consider two Texts of Scriptures, where we have this earnest spoken of. The first is by our Apostle in this Epistle, *cap. 5. 5.* Now he that hath wrought us for the self same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of his spirit. What is that self same thing he speaketh of? it is a groaning and an earnest desire after immortality; we would gladly be out of this burden here, and in heaven; yea, as we groan and desire, so we are assured and know, that

Places of Scripture where this earnest is spoken of.  
1. 2 Cor. 5. 5.



when we shall dye, we shall go to heaven. But now because these are things far above the power of nature, we naturally are afraid of death, we are unwilling to be taken from our relations, we have not such assurance of heaven. Therefore saith the Apostle, *He that doth work us, frame and polish us, for this great thing it is God.* We could never do it without his supernatural assistance: But then how doth God work this admirable frame of heart? it is *by the earnest of his spirit*; we have the beginnings of heaven already. So that as the *Israelites* by the bunches of raisins, had some foretaste of *Canaan*, so have beleivers some taste of heaven by what they feel already; and as *Moses* from Mount *Pisgah* could behold *Canaan*, though he did not enter into it: thus thou hast a sight of heaven, and an entrance into it by the grace begun in thee.

2. Eph. 1. 14.

The other Text is, *Eph. 1. 14.* where the Apostle having said, *That we were sealed by the spirit of promise,* he addeth, *which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.* We are not yet brought into heaven, into *Canaan*; We are yet in the wilderness, we meet with many dangers and temptations threatening us, that we shall never come there, but only this *earnest* doth assure us and satisfy us: So that as among the *Israelites*, an inheritance was not to be alienated from the Tribe, in the year of *Jubilee* it would return again to the true owner. Thus this inheritance of heaven will never be taken from thee. Thou maist be in some dangers and fears of losing of it, by thy unwise carriage, but shalt not be deprived of it.

How grace  
and an earnest  
differ?

Before we enlarge on this subject, it is good to take notice of the dissimilitude as well as the similitude; for though grace wrought in us be compared to an *earnest* in this respect, as it doth assure us of future glory, yet in other respects it greatly differeth from earnest among men.

1. An earnest  
assures both  
buyer and  
seller.

As in the first place, *An earnest in bargains is to assure the buyer that giveth it as well as the seller,* they mutually hereby are confirmed; so that the buyer cannot honestly fly off any more than the seller: But now when the spirit of God worketh this *earnest* in us, it is only for our good, it is that we may be assured and confirmed. As for God, he doth it not to assure himself of us, but that we may be assured of him: Indeed by consequent this assureth us to God, for having this earnest we are preserved from Apostacy, but the chief end is to confirm our faith in God, that we may be able with *Paul* to triumph, because *nothing shall separate us from the love of God in Christ.* It is then Gods gracious goodnesse to condescend to us, he knoweth our temper, and our temptations, he seeth how one doubt ariseth up after another; he taketh notice how apt we are to perplex our selves about the future, and therefore he giveth us this *earnest*, not for his own security, but ours: This is more than his meer promise, therefore the *Civilians* define an *earnest* to be a real security, in opposition to that which is verball or conventionall only. Gods promise is enough to secure us: but because we walk much according to sense, therefore he doth indulge thus farre, as to work in us, while in this valley of tears, the beginnings of eternall glory hereafter. In which respect, we are already said to *sit down with Christ in heavenly places*, *Eph. 2. 6.* and certainly if to a godly mans sense and experience, the foretasting of heaven be so great and refreshing, what is heaven it self? If an *earnest* be so wonderfull a matter, what is the possession and inheritance it self?

2. An earnest  
is done in a  
communitative  
way of  
justice

Secondly, *This heavenly earnest differeth from a worldly one, because amongst men this is done in a commutative way of justice.* There is a strict equality between the payment to be made, of which the *earnest* is part, and the thing purchased thereby: So that in humane contracts, an *earnest* is given as part of that payment which is equivalent to the thing purchased thereby. So that this whole way of commerce belongs to the common place of justice. Thus those who write *de Jure* and *justitia*, do under that treat, *De pignoris & hypothecis*,



su, but (alas) in this earnest God giveth us, here is no bargain, here is no justice, all is of free-grace; God doth bestow both the earnest and the whole sum, as it were, hereafter upon us freely. Both grace here, and glory hereafter, do alone proceed from the sole bounty and free-love of God. Inasmuch that the child of God is both begotten, nourished and perfected by free-grace alone.

Thirdly, *There is another dissimilitude flowing from the former, for he who giveth an earnest, intending thereby a full payment for something he would have, doth thereby purpose to advantage himself.* He would not give an earnest, but because he needeth the thing he buyeth, and thereupon would profit himself; but it is farre otherwise with God and us in this respect; God giveth us not this earnest, this grace, no nor glory hereafter, because he needeth us, but it is only for our good and consolation. It is true, that Christ gave no lesse than his own blood as a price to purchase us for a people to himself: But why was this? Was this to advantage himself? Was it such purchasings as when men buy houses and lands to enrich themselves and their posterity? No, but only to do us good thereby; So that herein is the goodnesse of God exceedingly commended unto us, that both the purchasing of us, and giving us an earnest to secure us of future glory, all is from his own munificence. In all this we are unprofitable and uselesse as to him.

3. By an earnest a man intends to advantage himself.

Lastly, Here is this dissimilitude, and that is a great one; *Amongst men when the earnest is given, yet there is sometimes upon a just cause, and more often upon unjust grounds, a breaking of the bargain.* They will lose the earnest rather than pay the whole sum; So that the *Casuits* dispute to whom the earnest in conscience belongs, if the covenant be not made good. Thus because man is a liar and deceitfull, an earnest is not such security, that we may absolutely depend upon it: Men are mutable, and are apt to break their engagements, but it is farre otherwise in this particular; God that hath given the earnest, is not as man to repent and to change his minde; No, this is given us on purpose to assure us that he will never alter: and if it be said, though God doth not alter, yet we may; We may abuse this earnest, yea, we may lose it, all which the *Arminians* plead. It is more fully to be cleared, that this earnest is to assure not only God to us, but us to God, whereby he will so preserve us, that nothing shall deprive us of eternal glory.

4. An earnest is oft lost.



## S E R M. CXXXIX.

*What is implied in Gods giving us the earnest of his Spirit?*

2 COR. 1. 22.

*Who hath also given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*

**T**He Spirit of God with the graces thereof (as we have heard) received and perceived by a beleever, are a sure earnest of future glory.

In the handling of which hitherto, we have only treated of the dissimilitude that is between this heavenly earnest, and an earnest amongst men: our work is now to shew positively, wherein the resemblance doth consist, or what is comprehended in this metaphorical expression.

What is implied in the earnest of Gods Spirit.  
1. Gods will to bring us to salvation.

And First, *Hereby is declared Gods will and infallible purpose to bring us unto eternal glory*; of which this grace received is an earnest. For (as you heard) it is not grace as grace, but grace as an earnest, that doth deserve an accent, as it were, upon it: The emphasis lieth in this. So that by these beginnings of Gods Spirit upon me, I may unquestionably conclude my future glory. And this *Chrysostome* upon the place doth well observe: *He doth not* (saith he) *singly and barely call it the spirit, but an earnest*, ἡ δὲ τοῦ πνεύματος χάρις πάντος ἀποφύκει, *that from this thou maist have boldnesse and confidence upon the whole, for if he did not intend to give thee all* (saith he) *he would not have given thee this earnest in vain, and so as to lose it.* Thus *Macarius* also an holy Writer, from this similitude gathereth, that such who have this earnest may rejoyce, and be as confident as if they were already crowned with glory, and reigning in heaven. *Hamil. 17.* ἀσφαλὲς ἔστιν αὐτὸ τὸ ἀρραβὸν ὃ δέδωκεν ὁ θεὸς ὡς ἡμεῖς ἐσπεύμενοι καὶ λαοι ἐυοχῶντες; oh then the unspeakable happinesse of such who do finde this earnest in their hearts! God would be found unfaithful, and to break his promise, if as he hath begun, so he should not also finish this work of grace in thee. So that the *Arminian* exception is very frivolous and absurd, saying, It is true, this is an earnest, but we may lose it: We may fall into such finnes as shall wholly cast us out of the favour of God: for this earnest is given us on purpose, to assure us that God will so preserve us, and by his grace so guide us, that we shall never fall out of this ark into the waters. What comfort and encouragement were in this expression, if it did denote no more then a conditional security; No, it is a positive and absolute security. Therefore that learned *Vossius* was under some temptation surely, when he wrote that *Pelagian* History; for in that he hath this passage, where speaking of some Ancients, who from the metaphor of an anchor and earnest conclude the certainty of eternal life, glosseth after this manner, *Histor. Pelag. lib. 6. Thes. 13.* Certos nos dicunt, quamdiu habemus arrhabonem spiritus sancti sed arrhabonem hunc si quis abiciat, hinc certitudinem simul salutis amittere: We are certain of eternal life, as long as we have this anchor,



*chor, this earnest; but if we lose it, we lose our certainty also of salvation.* How inexcusable is this, though some learned men, great friends to that excellent Authour say, that he promised to review that History of *Pelagian* heresie in time? For therefore is this earnest given us to take away our fears about the future: Whereas in their sense we must needs be as uncertain as before; and besides this earnest would need another earnest, and so *in infinitum*. The Scripture then by calling it an earnest would hereby inform us of Gods will, that he who hath given us the first-fruits will in time also give us the lump or harvest itself: he will so preserve us, that not only any thing without, as the devil and the world, but also any thing within us, our own hearts, our own lusts shall not betray us, and become our destruction: and certainly that reason of *Chrysostome*, which is also grounded upon the Scripture, is among others very remarkable. If God of his free-grace did (while enemies) convert us, and bestow his spirit as an earnest upon us, will he not much rather do it for us, since he hath received us into his friendship? To this purpose the Apostle also argueth very strongly, *Rom. 5. 9, 10. While we were yet sinners, Christ dyed for us, much more then being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from wrath through him: for if when we were enemies we were reconciled by death of his Sonne, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.* If then God hath done the greater, will he not do the lesse? when we wallowed in our lusts, when we tumbled in our filth, even then the grace of God did speak unto us to live, even then it did put comeliness and beauty upon us, and shall he not much more do it since he hath made us his own? So that the same grace of God which received us, though unworthy, will preserve us, though unworthy: and as our rebellious heart did not finally withstand converting grace, but was overcome by it, so will the grace of perseverance watch over us, that this earnest shall not be totally lost. For this end we have many glorious promises to encourage us in this particular; we must not then look upon our own dead wound, but the power and promise of God, concluding by this, Lord, I know thy will is, that I shall be saved, by this I am perswaded, that nothing, no, not I my self, shall separate my self from thy love, for thy grace will alwaies prevent my will.

Secondly, *In that it is called an earnest, there is implied, that grace here and glory hereafter are of the same nature; that they differ only gradually: Even as in an earnest amongst men, that is part of the full payment, and of the same nature with it.* Thus grace is nothing but glory begun, and glory grace perfected; for which cause it is called glory, *2 Cor. 3. 18. We are changed into the same image from glory to glory, that is, from grace to grace, till we come to inhabit glory: For which cause also the Apostle compareth our state of grace here to the state of a childe, and that of glory hereafter to a virile estate, 1 Cor. 13.* Now as a childe differeth from himself when made a man but gradually, he is the same individuall person still. Thus it is here, thy grace will not be abolished thou hast here, but perfected: We do but think and understand in heavenly things as children only, comparatively to what shall be done in heaven. Even as these individual bodies shall put on immortality and incorruptibility: They shall not be new bodies, but changed bodies. It is true, there are some graces which suppose an imperfection in the subject, while he is here in the way, at least in their actings, and so farre as there is imperfection, it shall be abolished: as *1 Cor 13.* Thus faith, as it justifieth, as it is opposed to vision, and hope as opposed to enjoying; repentance likewise as it is sorrow for sin, and patience which supposeth afflictions. These things cannot be put forth in heaven, but probably the habits of these graces may continue there, as being an ornament and perfection of the soul; it being extrinsecal only, and by accident, that the occasion of the exercise of those graces is removed, Hence some

2. That grace and glory are of the same nature.



(some say) but not probably, that the Spirit of God is a *pledge* in respect of faith and hope, because they shall cease, but an *earnest* in respect of charity, which abideth for ever. *Salmiron in loc.* No wonder then if *grace be an earnest of glory*, seeing they are the same thing in nature, and differ only as perfect and imperfect; yet when we say, that *grace is only glory begun*, that must be understood in a sound sense: for some of the Papists make an inward condignity between *grace* and *glory*: we are not then to think, that grace of it self would in a naturall and necessary way spring up into glory, as an Acorn would (in a physicall manner) breed up into an Oak, being feminally and causally contained in it. No, but in a moral sense, by the gracious appointment and order of God; *grace is glory begun*, otherwise such is the imperfection and drosse that is in our graces while in this life, that when we have arrived to the high st pitch, we might justly be deprived of glory. Grace in the Apostate Angels formerly, was not glory feminally and radically, for then they had not missed it: But if we do now regard the covenant of Gods grace, he hath so appointed it, that whosoever hath grace here, that shall be preserved and kept so faithfully, that it shall be perfected into glory hereafter. And thus the earnest is of the same nature with the full payment it self.

3. That heaven shall as certainly be ours as if we were already in it.

Thirdly and lastly, This similitude doth not only declare Gods purpose and effectually will concerning us, but it is also to *assure and perswade us of heaven, as if we were already in it*: and this is indeed one of the main ends of this similitude. God will by this inform us of the transcendent excellency of the covenant of grace above that of works, which he made with *Adam*; Thus our Saviour saith, *Joh. 5. 24. He that beleeveeth is passed from death to life, he is already*, and therefore is sure of everlasting happinesse; so that in this similitude there is not only the *perseverance* of the Saints denoted, but also their *assurance* and *certain perswasion* of it. And the truth is, great is the necessity of this doctrine; for while a godly man looketh upon what is to come, he seeth such a terrible wilderness he is to go through, such a Red Sea to passe over, such *Anakims* in the way to be destroyed, that had he not this certain perswasion, that he shall overcome all these difficulties, and that God would daily hold him in his arms of grace, that he shall not fall, his doubts and fears would wholly dishearten him. And thus much is comprehended in the metaphor of an *earnest*. It is not my purpose at this time to lanch into that ocean of the doctrine of perseverance, as also the certainty of it. I shall therefore amplifie this doctrine, with some few propositions, and so conclude it; for the excellency and comfortableness of it will not let us wholly passe it by: This precious flower can be found only in the paradise of the Scripture; Therefore *Austin* was weary of *Platonical Books*, because they had not these excellent things in them, the Scripture hath, whereof this *arra spiritus, the earnest of the spirit* is one he instanceth in, *lib. confes. cap. 7.*

1. The comfort of perseverance is only to be improved by those that are certain of the work of grace in them.

As first, We must know, that *comfort of perseverance is only improved by those, that are certain of the present work of grace in their souls*. He that findeth grace for the present in his soul, may undoubtedly conclude of his salvation hereafter; but if a Christian do lie in doubts, whether he hath grace or no, this doctrine will not be as the honey-comb to him, for he hath not laid the foundation that this must be built upon: but if his thoughts about the present work of grace be hopefull only in him, then also are his thoughts about perseverance hopefull only: He may have some comfort, but not such a certainty as the Scripture propoundeth: Neither can he use those triumphing expressions of holy confidence, which *Paul Rom. 8.* speaketh not of himself, by any peculiar revelation, but of all the children of God, that nothing shall separate him from the love of God in Christ.

Secondly,



Secondly, There are some Doctors and Teachers, who make the *certainty of our present grace, and of perseverance therein, two distinct, yea, and separable things*. They will grant that a man may be certain of the present grace he hath, but then they deny he is to be certain that he shall continue and persevere in this; for they affirm, that a man may have true grace, and yet totally and finally fall from it; others say, that a man may have grace, and not be elected, and such may lose it, but he that hath true grace and elected, that man shall never lose his interest in heaven: Nay, some of these Teachers do not only deny any such certainty of perseverance in our present grace either ordinarily possible or necessary. But say such a certainty would be very dangerous and destructive to all vigilancy and carefulness in an holy life; for what a man is assured of, he cannot fear he shall lose, let him live how he will; but this upon another account is in time to be more largely debated. Therefore for the present I only adde this third Proposition, *viz.*

*That the certainty which the godly have, is not such an absolute abstracted one, as that it doth not include the means leading to salvation, but rather doth necessarily connote them.* Infomuch that if any godly man should be left to such a desperate frame of heart, as to say, I am sure of heaven, let me fall into the most abominable impieties that are, these shall not hinder salvation; such an one would certainly be damned: but that is not to be supposed, that such who have the true seed of grace, will ever be given up to such a prophane spirit. The certainty then that a believer hath, is in the use of means to attain their desired end; so that it's like, the assurance that *Paul* had concerning the preservation God would vouchsafe to all his fellow-passengers in the ship with him, which yet did relate to the necessary use of means, as *Paul* exhorteth them; or like that of *Hezekiah*, to whom God promised the addition of fifteen years longer to his life. Now he was assured of this, God could not lye, yet he did not neglect to eat and drink; he knew Gods promise implied the use of the means, so that the adversaries to this Truth do fully mistake, when they say, we preach such a certainty of perseverance, that through a man fall into any enormous crimes, yet he shall enjoy this still: This is *oppositum in appposito* to suppose, that if fire be water, it will refrigerate.

Fourthly, *We are further to distinguish of a two-fold certainty in this matter of salvation and perseverance in the way therein.* The first I call a *dogmaticall certainty*, and that is when a man is fully convinced out of the Scripture of this truth in the generall, that whosoever hath once had true grace, shall never fall from it, but certainly shall be saved; and he that hath this, differeth from those corrupt and erroneous Teachers that affirm the contrary, as the *Arminians* and their compliers in this respect: for there is no more reason to doubt of this doctrinal point, than others that are maintained by the Orthodox against that party; so that there is no more reason to make this a problematical point, wherein learned men may dissent from one another, then any other in the Arminian controversies. But 2. there is a *personal or reflexive certainty*; and that is when a man doth not only beleeve this position as a truth, that he who hath true grace cannot fall from it, but also is perswaded, that he hath true grace in his own heart, and therefore that he is built upon such a rock, that no storms or tempests shall be able to overthrow him, and this is that every godly man is to presse after: This text is a speciall furtherance in this work, for the *spirits sealing* perswadeth of the grace already wrought in us, and the *earnest* doth assure us of that which is to come. If you ask, what grounds there are, why he who findes grace in himself may thus conclude infallibly for heaven hereafter? I shall amongst many give three only, which is such a threefold cord that can never be broken.

As first, *That all true grace is the proper effect of predestination*; so that whosoever

2. There are divers opinions concerning this nearness.

3. Certainty of perseverance doth not exclude means.

4. This certainty is either  
1. dogmaticall,  
or

2. Personal.

Reasons why they who have this earnest cannot fall away.

I.



soever is effectually called in time, is thereby declared to be predestinated before the world began. Thus the Apostle, *Rom. 8. 30. whom he did predestinate, he called; and those he justifieth, and those he glorifieth.* You see it's a chain of Gods making, and so cannot be dissolved; therefore *Tit. 1. 1.* it's called the faith of Gods elect: so *Eph. 1. 4. he hath chosen us before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy.* We see then, that holiness and true faith is proper to the elect only, and therefore to distinguish of a two-fold Sonship of God; some by present grace only, and some by election also, and that there are persevering sons and apostatizing, wherein election maketh the difference (which opinion some attribute to *Austin*) is wholly inconsistent with Scripture, and *Austin* himself in other places, if that were his opinion. The godly then are to look upon the grace of God wrought in them as the effect of Gods immutable and unchangeable love, which will certainly obtain its end.

2. Secondly, Their certainty of salvation, and so of perseverance therein, is built upon the many promises of God, which are made to this very end, as that famous one, *Jer. 32. 40. I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me.* What can be more pregnant than this? God covenants he will not turn from them; and withall to put such fear in their hearts that they shall not turn from him. So also *Phil. 1. 6.* being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will also finish it. His confidence was not in them; for alas, we should prove the prodigals, and lose all; but it is in Gods grace, and that because he had begun; for none shall say of him, he began to build, and could not finish: So that the wisdom, mercy, and glory of God is interested in our perseverance, and indeed if our sinnes should hinder him from continuance of his grace, why did they not from the beginning at first? were we not then objects of his displeasure? So that in our conversion the greatest work was done; then we had, as *Chrysostome* saith upon the place, the beginning and root of what was to come.

3. Lastly, The union that is between Christ and a beleever being indissoluble, doth necessarily infer the certainty of his salvation, a member of Christs body shall not be taken from him, and thrown into hell; for from this union. as their bodies shall necessarily rise to glory, so their souls also shall be prepared for the same.





## SERM. CXL.

## Of Swearing.

2 COR. I. 23.

*Moreover I call God to record upon my soul, that to spare you, I came not as yet to Corinth.*

**T**He Apostle having made a short, but happy and admirable digression, occasioned from his discourse, *vers. 17.* about the calumny of levity and carnal reasonings, and motives concerning his promise to come to them, doth in this verse return to that matter again, plainly informing of them, that it was not any *inconstancy* or *carnal respect* in himself, that made him delay his coming; but the fault was wholly in themselves, they were not yet prepared for his coming, which for the greater confirmation and authority he doth attest, with a solemn and sacred Oath. It is true, *Chrysostome* doth beginne the second Chapter at this Text, and so the *Syriack*. Yea *Beza* saith, *We ought to beginne the second Chapter here.* In which respect *Calvin* and *Musculus* comment upon it accordingly: but the matter is not worth a contest.

In the words you may observe,

1. An Oath. And
2. The Matter of an Oath.

1. The Oath is a very compleat and perfect one, *I call God to witnesse upon my soul.*

Of the Oath first. As for *Pelagians* and others, who affirm an Oath to be unlawfull, under the Gospel at least, and that in these or the like expressions; *Paul* doth not swear, because he doth not use the Preposition *per*, or *by*, or *in* and *in*, in the Greek, it's an absurdity afterwards to be refuted.

The Oath in the Text is an *Affertory Oath*, wherein God is expressly called upon as a witnesse; and withall an *Execration* is added, *Upon my soul*, that is, *Let God damn my soul, if it be not true*: he doth not mention his soul, as part of the Oath, as if that were a witnesse as well as God; but he mentioneth it as a pawn or pledge; and so it is lawfull to name some creatures that we love, or are dear to us, in an oath; not that we may swear by them, but as pledges. So that this Oath is both *Affertory* and *Execratory*; not that these make two distinct kindes of Oaths; for one doth necessarily imply the other: He that calleth upon God as a Witnesse, doth thereby imply him a Judge and an Avenger, if he swear falsely. Onely I call it an *Execratory Oath*, as well as an *Affertory*, because the *Execration* is mentioned; whereas for the most part in Oaths it is not expressed.

If you say, *What reason or urgent necessity was here for Paul thus to make such a deliberate and solemn Oath?*

Pppp

I answer,



I answer, Very great. The adversaries of *Paul* did accuse him and traduce him for a vain and inconstant person, which hereby did redound to the dishonour of the Ministry, the hinderance of the Gospel, the destruction of Christs Church; therefore it was necessary for him to take this Oath, *That no carnal motive made him delay his promise, but a wise and spiritual consideration of their good.* Thus at another time, speaking of his earnest affections to his brethren after the flesh, *Rom. 9. 1.* he sweareth after this manner, *I speake the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing witness in the Holy Ghost.* So in this Epistle again, *2 Corinth. 1. 1. 20.* *As the truth of Christ is in me.* *Rom. 1. 9.* *For God is my witness that I make mention of you alwayes in my prayers.* *Gal. 1. 20.* *The things that I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.*

Thus you see by many instances, the holy Apostle making use of an Oath, but alwayes upon necessary occasions for Gods glory, and the edification of others. From whence observe,

It is lawfull under the Gospel to swear after a right manner upon necessary occasions.

*That it is lawfull even under the Gospel, to swear after a right and godly manner, upon necessary and urgent occasions.*

I say, *under the Gospel*; for some have granted it lawfull under the Old Testament, as (they say) to circumcise, to sacrifice was; but under the Gospel, they hold it absolutely forbidden.

So that the handling of this truth about *swearing*, or a *lawfull oath*, is of great importance, both for doctrinal information against *Pelagians*, *Socinians*, some *Anabaptists*, who hold it unlawfull under the Gospel: As also of direction, to know wherein an Oath doth consist; and whether many formes used commonly by people are oaths, or no. And then withall, it is of great practical use, if possible, to remove that ungodly and wicked custome of ordinary swearing, without any due consideration of the nature of an oath. For how general and epidemical is this sinne? Old and young, yea little children can swear as soon as speake; rich and poore; yea men glory in their oaths, and deride at the strictnesse of such, who will be so precise, as to abstaine from them. They looke upon oathes as the glory of their speech, and becoming a Gentleman. But *Solomon's* description of a godly man will abide good, when such prophane miscreants, shall lie for ever roaring in hell, *viz. That he is one who feareth an oath, Eccles. 9. 2.* A righteous man, a good man, and he that feareth an oath, are synonymous expressions. You see then what a fruitfull field we are plowing up: but I shall not venture upon all the cases about Oaths, which would require a great volume; onely limit my self to my Text, which containeth onely an assertory Oath, not a promissory. And indeed because it is the most formal and expresse oath that we meet with in the Scripture, we must improve it according to the desert of it.

Two sorts of persons there are who have runne into extreames about an Oath.

First, Such who out of a great reverence to God, and because every mans word should be as good and as firm as an Oath, have therefore wholly refused to use it. To such we shall prove the lawfulness of it; Yea the necessity and duty of it in some cases. On the other extreame are many prophane and wretched men, who use these sacred Oaths in all ordinary discourse, vainly, irreverently; yea sometimes arise to such high impiety and wickednesse, as not onely to swear rashly and vainly, but also falsely, so as to forswear themselves, and become guilty of perjury; a sinne so contrary to the light of nature, that *Heathens* have severely punished it. And God doth



doth, seldome let such perjured persons goe unpunished in this world without some remarkable punishment. For that terrible threatning will not prove false or a lie, *Zech. 5. 3, 4.* where a flying roll, that is, the curse of God, is said, *To enter into the house of him that sweareth falsely, and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof.*

But before we come to these particulars, let us first consider of the nature of an Oath (an assertory one especially, for that is my subject) what it is, and we may define it to be, What an oath is.

First, *A religious calling upon God, as a witnesse, for the confirmation of any thing in doubt or controversy.* The Latines call it *juramentum*, or *jurandum*, which is all one, though some would make a difference; because that an Oath doth *jus*, or *I gem dare*; it declareth the right, and law (as it were) of a thing, after which we are not to dispute any more: Or else because it doth *Jus dare Deo*, or because *jure introductum*: All *Heathens* concluding on this remedy by an oath, against controversies, as most expedient. The Greek word *ἐρκος*, some make to come of *ἐρκος*, an *establishment*, or of *ἐρκειν*, to constringe and bind, because an oath brings a bond or strict obligation upon a mans soul. Thus *Numb. 30. 2, 3, 4.* In a *vow*, which in this respect agreeth with an oath, therefore it is added, *Or swear an Oath*, a man or woman are thereby said, *To binde their soule with a bond.* The Hebrew word is ordinarily *Shebugna*, which they derive from *Shebang*, the number of *seven*, because an Oath useth to be amongst many witnesses: and withall it is observed, that the word to *swear* is used in *Niphal*, a *passive voice*, signifying thereby, that a man is not to *swear*, unlesse he be (as it were) solemnly compelled unto it.

Now this definition given of an Oath, hath in it four parts:

The generical Nature, the Form, the Matter, and the End.

1. The generical Nature, it is a religious calling.
2. The Form, upon God as a witnesse.
3. The Matter, which is doubtfull and controversial.

Lastly, The End, or the Effect (as some dispute) which is the confirmation of this. For after Oaths there is to be no more arguing. Hence *Aquinas* saith well, *That what first principles are in speculatives, the same is an Oath in practicals.* Now as first principles are indemonstrable, and none may deny them, or goe to prove them; so is an Oath; it is an artificial argument to prove a thing indemonstrably. And thus *Aristotle* defined, That it was an indemonstrable argument or word without proof; with a reverent and sacred use, *κατὰ θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων φάσις ἀνυπόδεικτος*, *Rhetorica ad Alex. cap. de Jurejurando.*

Let us consider this definition, upon which some Cases and Questions of Conscience are afterwards to be built. And

First, We say, *It is a religious calling upon God.* Hence an Oath is the worship of God; when a man sweareth in a right manner, he giveth honour and glory to God, believing him to be Omniscient, and a searcher of the heart; as also an holy Judge, who will punish and be avenged upon all such, who shall take his Name in vaine. Hence it is reckoned in Scripture as part of Divine Worship, *Deuter. 6. 10. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his Name.* So *Deuter. 10. 20. Thou shalt cleave to him, and swear by his Name.* Yea the whole worship of God is sometimes synecdochically contained in this action onely, *Isaiah 45. 23. To me every tongue shall swear.* Thus it is made a propheticall promise in Gospel-times, *That he who sweareth, shall swear by the God of truth,* by which all Gospel-worship is intended, *Isa. 65. 16.* Oh how little is this

I. It is a religious calling upon God.



considered by common swearers, whose mouths are filled with daily oaths. Doe you consider what an Oath is? Doe you remember it is a solemn worship of God? If God were an Idol, yea a man, you could not more abuse and despise his holy Name than thou doest. Is this to worship God? Every oath should be with holy fear and trembling at the Majesty of God: But thou tramplest his honour prophanely under thy foot. Judge ye, how prophane you your selves would think men to be, if they should be so vain and customary in other holy worship. Should a man take the holy *Psalmes*, and sing them as idly, and as vainly, as he doth ordinary songs, would you not call such a man a prophane man? Prayer also that is a worship of God, should a man in his prayer be no more reverent than in his merry tales, or idle discourse, would you not say, such a man was a vile wretch? Take the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, should a man receive that with no more reverence than he doth his ordinary food; should he make no difference between the Lords Cup, and a Cup of Ale at the Ale-house; Would ye not gnash your teeth at such a man, as an atheistical person? And is it any lesse prophanenesse, when you make oaths, and your ordinary discourse all one? The very word *Sacrament* was taken from an *Oath*, as the learned shew: What shall be done unto thee then thou swearing and cursing tongue? Every trifle, every passion setteth thy tongue thus on fire from hell.

Secondly, Again I say, *It is a religious calling upon God.* For an *Oath* may bee either pronounced *speculatively*, and *enuntiatively*, or *practice*, and *invocative*; practically, and by way of invocation: As for example, when I reade this Text, *I call God to witnesse upon my soul*; while I doe so, I doe not swear; yet *Paul* when he expressed them, he did swear. For I onely repeat them enuntiatively, and by recitation; I doe not practically call upon God. Thus when a Magistrate, or any inferiour Officer readeth a forme of an Oath to him who shall swear, this reading of it doth not make him swear, because he doth it not by calling upon God.

2. It is a calling upon God as a witnesse.

In the next place, There is the *Forme of this Oath*, and that is, *Calling upon God, as a witnesse.* A two-fold forme we may speak of in an *Oath*, *Internal*, and that is, when God is called to *witnesse*: Or *External*, and that is a forme of words. Of which in its time, because many Disputes are, whether such formes be Oaths or no? For the present, *The Internal*, is *God called upon as a witnesse.* In somuch that all oaths made by creatures, or swearing by them, is utterly unlawfull. For seeing to swear is (as you heard) a divine Worship, it must needs be Idolatry to give this worship to any other but God. Neither will the Popish distinction of *swearing by a creature transitive*, or *relative*, with reference to God; and *terminative*, or *absolute*, be able to make escape from the jealousie of God in this matter, as is to be shewed. Although not onely *Pagans* and *Papists*, but even many *Protestants*, are guilty of this Idolatry, to swear by *Saints* and *Angels*, by creatures irrational, and rational. But woe be to such, because of their horrible offences in this kinde! Now when we say, *God is called upon as a witnesse*; hereby is declared, That an Oath in its nature tends to the glory of God; for it is built upon this fundamental Article of Faith, *That God hath an all-seeing eye*, as also an *avenging one*, where men deale perfidiously, God is called as a *witnesse*, and so by consequence as a *Judge*. And in this an *Oath* differeth from a *Vow*. For though a *Vow* be also a religious worship of God, yet in that God is considered (as it were) a *party*, with whom we make a sacred promise; but in an *Oath*, we attend to God as a *witnesse*, as he that *knoweth all things*. And therefore how highly do these common swearers sinne? For while they swear, they make use of his name, who knoweth all things, who observeth those very words and expressions at that time. Certainly this considerati-

on



on of Gods witnessing at that time, should fill thee with much terror.

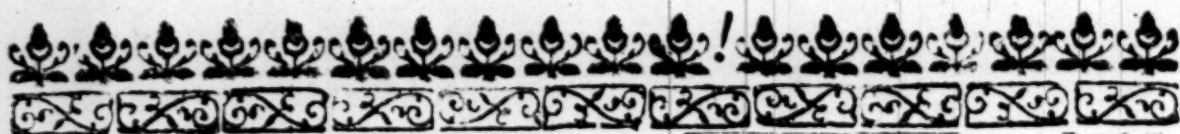
In the third place, There is the *Matter*, and that is *doubtfull* and *controversial*, *Whether it be a thing past, present, or future*. For an *assertory Oath* may be about iuture things; as if a man should swear the infallible event of such a thing, which yet he doth not promise to accomplish. This the Apostle sheweth, when he calls an *Oath*, Heb. 6. 6, *The end of a controversie*. Therefore to use an *Oath* about manifest and evident things, is an abuse of the end of it. Had *Adam* continued in the state of innocency, there had been no need of *Oaths*, because there would have been no doubts, no controversies, there would have been no falshood or injustice amongst men. But after sinne came into the world, then man became sinfull and false, as the Devil, that did deceive him. So that although *Oaths* are lawfull in some cases, yet it is because of sinne: they become necessary, because of mans transgression. And therefore Divines say well, That although an *Oath* be a worship of God, yet it is not as other worship is, of it self to be desired, and constantly exercised, as to pray unto God, and to praise God; but onely it is to be desired *propter aliud*, supposing sinne in man going before. Even as Physicke is not in it selfe to be desired, but upon supposition of a disease; so that if mankind were as honest, faithfull and righteous, as they ought to be, there would be no need of *Oaths*; and frequent use even of lawfull and necessary *Oaths*, suppose a distempered Nation, even as continual use of Physicians, demonstrate a diseased people.

3. It is in a doubtfull matter.

Lastly, Here is the *End of swearing*, and that is *εἰς βεβαιώσιν*, saith the Apostle, (Hebrews 6. 6.) for *confirmation*; and therefore called *μεγας ἀπλοχίας*, the *Ne plus ultra* of any controversie: not that alwayes it doth confirme the truth. For how many ungodly and gracelesse persons doe sweare falsely? But in the nature of it it is for that end. It is true, your common swearers, they doe so grossely abuse an *Oath*, that the end is wholly frustrated, no sober man giving them the more credit, because they sweare: yea the more they sweare, the more they suspect them for lying.

4. The end of it is for confirmation.





## SERM. CXLI.

## Of Oaths and several expressions used in Swearing.

2 COR. 1.23.

*Moreover I call God to record upon my soul, &c.*

**T**He Definition and lawfulness of an *Oath* in necessary and urgent motives being declared, I shall proceed to answer some Cases or Questions, and that from the Description given. Only

First, It is good to take notice, that there are these four things may be used to the confirmation of any thing that is said.

The first is, *A bare Affirmation, or Negation*, according to that command, *Let your communication be yea and nay.*

2. When we to this affirmation adde an *Asseveration* or *Attestation*. Thus our Saviour many times, *Verily, verily*; which is not an oath, as learned men shew against those, who have thought to: so when we say *truly*, or *indeed*, this is an asseveration.

3. There is an *Obtestation*, and that cometh near to an Oath, but is not an Oath; and that is, when we doe appeale (as it were) to the creatures, to witness: such a thing, as *Moses* to affect the senseless *Israelites*, said, *Hear, O Heavens, and hearken, O Earth.* Thus *Paul*, (1 Tim. 5. 21.) *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect Angels.* He doth not there swear, but use an *Obtestation*, and that not onely before God, and Christ, but *Angels* also; for they are present with us, and bear witness of us.

Lastly, There is an *Oath*, and that is, *When we call upon God as a witness, to confirme what is spoken.* I say, *When we call upon him as a witness.* For when there is a meer allgation of some Text of Scripture, to confirme a truth, there is a witness of God made use of, he is then brought as a witness; but it is not an Oath, because it is not by way of Invocation.

In the next place, *Oaths* may either be completely and perfectly expressed, as here in the Text: Or else elliptically or defectively, which is very ordinary, *If they enter into my rest; God doe so to me, and more also.* Many times the creature that is dear to us, we mention, as exposing it to Gods curie, if we say not truth, and the name of God is not mentioned. This is good to be remembred, because many use execratory speeches, and thinke, because God is not named, here is no swearing, where-



whereas they are terrible oaths, such are, *Would I might never stirre, would I might be hanged, &c.* These are horrible execratory oaths, though God be not named.

These two things premised, let us consider, *What doubts may be raised from the forementioned definition of an Oath?* And

First, In that an Oath is said to be a religious calling upon God, it may be asked, *Whether words be necessary to an oath?* May it not be by other signes?

1. Whether words be necessary to an oath.

The Answer is, That a man may swear *mentally*, and in his heart only, because God is a searcher of that, and knoweth every thing which moveth in us.

Ans.

And again, Dumb men, as *Zacharias* for instance, no doubt might have sworn by some signes he might make. Hence the Comical Poet, cited by *Covarruvias* and *Grotius*, *ὅρκος κεφαλῆς ἐστίν, αἰ νεύω μόνον*, *It is a firme Oath, though I doe but nodde with my head.* A man also may swear by writing; and thus the Apostles Oath is here in the Text by writing. Yea *Austin's* observation is, That he doth not remember, that ever the Apostle did swear any otherwise than in *writing*, not in speech or discourse, he delivered by mouth: And hereby an Oath is made more deliberate. If no men would swear, but first write it down, it would be a special means to stop much ungodly swearing.

The second Question is, We define an Oath to be a religious calling upon God as a witnesse; *Whether then it be not lawfull to sweare by the creature?* What is more ordinary, not onely amongst Papists, but Protestants also, than to swear by the light, by this bread, by their faith and truth; and these are creatures?

2. Whether it be not lawfull to swear by the creature.

To this it is answered,

First, That the Papists (*Covarruvias part. prima relect. de juram.*) though they hold an Oath to be a religious worship of God, yet they say, *we may sweare by creatures*; but with this distinction, not absolutely and terminatively staying in them, but relatively to God, whose power and goodnesse is eminent in the creatures. But this is an empty distinction. For our Saviour doth absolutely prohibit to sweare by the creatures (*Matth. 5.*) and the command is often, *to sweare by God alone*; they are reprov'd also, who sweare by God and *Baal*, God and *Milchom*. For although they were *Idols*, yet the reason of the prohibition is, because they are not Gods, and every creature is not a god; therefore it is not lawfull to sweare by any creature, neither terminatively nor transitively; for all is Idolatry, giving the worship due to God, unto the creature. It is true, though a man sweare by the creature (which is unlawfull) yet it is an Oath for all that, and doth oblige, as our Saviour informed against the *Pharisees*. *Non te audit lapis loquentem, sed Deus te punit fallentem*, saith *Austin*, speaking of the Heathenish custome, which was to hold a flint in their hands, while they did sweare, saying, *If I doe deceive, let me be cast out of the City, as I throw away this stone.* This they call'd swearing, *Per Jovem lapidem*. Therefore it is a foolish and senselesse evasion of many, to say, they doe not sweare by God; they are but petty oaths (as is to be shew'd.) For here is the more Idolatry, when you sweare by a creature: Is your Faith a God. Is your Troth a God? Is the Light and Bread you sweare by a God? These oaths were usual amongst *Heathens*. *Socrates*, whether it was to deride the *Heathens* opinions about their gods, would sweare by a *Cocke*, and by a *Dogge*. It cannot be denied, but that it might be, men at first out of a superstitious reverence

Ans.

to



to God, did forbear to swear by him; but herein they did more dishonour God, while they thought to honour him, which is alwayes the fruit of superstition. Some Protestants indeed (*Calvin* and *Peter Martyr*) are said in some sense to allow swearing by creatures, as the symbols of Gods presence and power: but that is not safe; and there is no creature, but in it the power and wisdom of God doth appear, so that then we might swear by every creature. God then onely is to be sworne by; for he alone is the all-seeing witness of all that we doe, and omnipotent to punish such as shall take his Name in vaine. So that thou art not to thinke thou art clean from the dishonour of God, because thou swearest, but dost not name him.

How we may mention a creature in an oath, and not swear by it.

Ans.w.1.

It is true, two wayes learned men say, we may mention a creature in an Oath, though we do not swear by it. And

The first is, when we mention it as a *pledge*, in which we desire God would punish us, if we say not the truth. As here in the Text, *Paul* doth name his soule, though he doth not sweare by it. And in this sense some excuse that speech of *Joseph's*, *By the life of Pharaoh*, Genes. 42. 15. For (say they) his meaning is, *As dear as Pharaoh's life is unto me, which I would have God constantly preserve, it is thus and thus*. Even as in the primitive times, though the *Christians* refused to swear, *Per genium Imperatoris*, yet they did swear *per salutem*, as that which was dear unto them. Although for that fact of *Joseph*, some say, it was his sinne, and condemn him therein, as if by living in *Pharaoh's* Court, he had contracted this sinfull custome.

Ans.w.2.

In the second place, It is lawfull to mention a creature in an Oath, and not swear by it, *When we make a collation, and comparison (as it were) betweene the truth of one thing, and another*. As when *David* said to *Jonathan*, *As the Lord liveth, and as thy soule liveth, there is but a steppe betweene me and death*, 1 Samuel 10. 3. Thus *Hannah* said to *Eli*, *O my Lord, as thy soule liveth, I am the woman that stood here praying*, 1 Sam. 1. 26. Thus *Abner* said to *Saul*, when he asked him, *Whose sonne David was?* he answered, *As thy soule liveth, O King, I cannot tell*, 1 Sam. 17. 55. In these places, they doe not sweare by the soule of a man, but make a comparison, as sure as they live; which is plaine and manifest, so surely is such a thing true. And in this sense likewise some defend that Oath of the primitive Christians, *By the safety or life of the Emperour*, if thereby they did not meane God himself; as *David* often calleth God, *The health and light of his countenance*, yea his life alio. Now although in these respects a creature may be named lawfully, yet the latter way is not to be used by Christians. For it is offensive to godly eares, especially that is a wicked and most ungodly comparison, which some men use, when they will say, *Such a thing is as true, as God is true*. For that is blasphemy to compare a creature, and the infinite Majesty of God together in matter of truth.

3. Whether it is lawfull to say, I vow 'tis so.

In the third place, Concerning this Definition of an Oath, that is, *A religious calling upon God*; we may question concerning some forme of speeches, which are frequently used amongst us, whether they be Oaths, or no. As

First, Many have this ordinary expression, *I vow to God it is so*. Is this lawfull?

Ans.w.

To which *Suarez* answereth, (*Disput. de Juramento*) saying, *That it is not onely an improper and absurd speech, but also very ungodly, and highly wicked*. It is improper and absurd, for it confounds a *vow* with an *oath*.

A vow



A *vow* is not properly used to confirme a thing, for that is the nature of an *Oath*. But if there were impropriety onely in it, that were not so hainous; but it is abominable irreverence, making such things the object of a vow, which are light and triviall. And thereupon some conclude, There is more prophanenesse and irreverence in it, then in using an oath: yea (they say) it is a very great *Oath*.

But then secondly, The great Question is, *Whether these expressions (in faith) and (by faith) are oaths, or not?*

Whether in  
faith, and by  
faith be oaths.

To which I say,

Ans.

First, When there is a doubt and dispute, whether such a forme of speech be an *Oath*? then the safest way for thy conscience, is to abstaine from expressions, as the Apostle argueth, (*Romans 14.*) *Whatsoever is done doubting, is a sinne.* If then there be a dispute, and that amongst learned men, Whether *in faith* (for most grant *by faith* to be one) be an *Oath*? Is it not farre better for thee to leave off such forme of words? If there were nothing but the scandall to others, it is a just cause to make thee avoid such expressions: So that the disputes about the thing, is argument enough to make thee leave these words, there being no necessity to use them.

But in the second place, lest you might say, Perhaps they are some Precisians and Doctors of that strictnesse that may thinke *in faith*, to be *Oaths*: Even amongst the Popish Authours, there are those who judge so. Onely they distinguish about *faith*, What *faith* doe you meane (say they) when you say *in faith*? If the *Christian faith*, that is a sacred thing, and so it's an *Oath*; if a *moral faith*, that is nothing, but *humane veracity*, or a *civil faith*, as we may call it, the faith of a Nobleman or Gentleman; then (they say) it is no *Oath*. But who is there that *faith in faith*, doth consider what *faith* he meaneth? Nay some perhaps, if they were asked that Question, could not tell how to answer it. Onely because not onely men of the greater ranke, but of the inferior sort, doe use that expression, and because they doe it for further confirmation; it is to be presumed, that they meane the *Christian faith*; and if so, according to some Popish Authours, it is an *Oath*. Neither is that any thing considerable to say, we doe not use the Preposition *by*; we doe not say *by faith*, but *in faith*; as *Soto* the Papist faith, To say *by faith* is an *Oath*, but not to say *in faith*. For *Suarez* an acuter Jesuite faith, (*Disp. de Juram.*) *That such an exception is vaine*; and that *by faith*, and *in faith* is all one. Neither doth the Preposition make an *Oath*. We conclude then, that *in faith*, as well as *by faith*, are *Oaths*. It's true, Doctor *Ames* opinion is, That *in faith* is no more, than an asseveration. Onely he addeth, *We must abstaine from the Preposition by*. But (as I said) *in* and *by* are all one, in this case. And if you say, Why should *in faith* be more an *Oath*, than *in deed*, or *in sincerity*? To this Doctor *Sanderson* giveth a considerable answer, (*De Juram. Praelect. 1. Sect. 8.*) he maketh foure *xptmeia*, or markes, by which we may discover some formes of speech to be *Oaths*; and one of them is, *The custome and use of the Countreyes language, where we live*. So that although it may fall out, that if we doe regard the words, there is no reason, why one should be not an *Oath*, more than another, yet the custome and use of the Countrey must carry it, because words doe not signifie naturally, but by meere institution. So that as that may be money in one Countrey, which may not be in another: Thus that expression may signifie an *Oath*, in one Countrey, which doth not in another.



We grant therefore, that if we doe respect the meere words, there is no argument can be given, why *in deed* should not be an *Oath*, as well as *in faith*; but the custome of speech in this Land, at least amongst those who are more sober, and desire to feare an Oath, is to judge of it as an Oath. And no doubt but those that use it, doe for the most part intend so. Yea, why doe many use that expression *in faith*, but because they would not be thought too precise? For by this they would be distinguished from others, who are more strict. This is the *Shibboleth* (as it were) by which they would be notified. Besides, it is a Rule amongst *Casuits*, That *Juramentum est stricti juris*, because of the danger that may be therein. And, *Quando verbum est ambiguum, presumendum est in salutem animæ*. It being better, if we doe erre to abstain from words, that may be an Oath, than to venture upon them, because of our particular perswasion.

I shall therefore conclude this, with that Authour above-mentioned,  
 “ He that while he doth attend onely to the forme, or force of words,  
 “ indulgeth himselfe in a liberty of using such expressions in his com-  
 “ mon discourse, without any choice or scruple, which by long use have  
 “ obtained with us the esteeme of an Oath, doth violate the command  
 “ of Christ concerning not swearing; giveth a scandall to his brother,  
 “ and exposeth himselfe to the danger of perjury. This is very good  
 and grave counsell. Therefore whatsoever the Dispute may be about  
 these termes, whether oaths, or not, let him who loveth his soule, who  
 would not give a just scandal to his brother, and is knowne by his chara-  
 cter, that he *feareth an Oath*, with all diligence and circumspection avoid  
 such expressions for the future.





## SERM. CXLII.

*It is lawfull in some Cases to swear; how and when it is thus lawfull?*

2 COR. I. 23.

*Moreover I call God to record upon my soul, &c.*

**T**He definition of an *oath* being delivered, we now come to satisfie that party, which holdeth an *oath* is absolutely unlawfull under the Gospel: as also to shew you, *how it is lawfull, and when it is lawfull*, that so common swearers may be ashamed and confounded, to see what guilt they daily bring upon themselves, and yet never lay it to heart. As for those who have abstained from an oath as *unlawfull*, we finde the sect of *Essen's* among the Jews reckoned by learned men as remarkable. This sect was at the same time with the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*, whose manners and way *Josephus* relateth at large. yet (say some) our Saviour did not reprove their superstitions, because they lived solitary in places remote from Towns and commerce of men: *Eusebius* upon a mistake doth suppose them to be Christians. Now their opinion was, that it did not beseem a man to swear. They thought a mans word should be as firm as an oath, yet that they were not absolutely against swearing, appeareth in that they took an oath of every member admitted into their society, to walk according to their rules. The *Pelagians* besides their doctrinall heresies, had two practicall Positions, which seemed to favour of much piety and religion. The one was, that a rich man abiding rich, could not be saved; whatsoever was above necessity he was bound to abdicate. The other was, that it is wholly unlawfull to swear upon any occasion; and as for *Pauls* examples, they denied them to be oaths; and as for the instance taken from God himself, that he did swear, their answer was, that though God the Master might swear, yet it did not follow that servants might, especially when their Master forbiddeth them. The Papists some of them, though they hold it lawfull to swear, yet they judge abstinence from it a counsell belonging to perfect men, and not a precept. They usually likewise charge it upon the *Waldenses*, as if they judged an Oath absolutely unlawfull. The *Socinians* they indeed grant an Oath lawfull in necessary cases; only their error is, That whereas rash and vain swearing was not forbidden in the Old Testament; The Jews in their ordinary discourse might swear, so only false swearing was prohibited: Now Christ as a more perfect Law-giver doth not only forbid forswearing, but that common rash swearing. But this is built upon their false foundation, That Christ perfected the morall Law, not by explication and declaration only, against Pharisaicall glosses, but by addition of new precepts. Some *Anabaptists* in this latter age have positively condemned all Oaths, and therefore



refused to swear before Magistrates, thinking that our Saviour, *Matthew 23*. did forbid it, because he saith, *Swear not at all, but let your yea be yea, and nay nay, &c.* Yea, some of the Fathers, as *Tertullian*, *Basil*, *Chrysostome*, and others, do seem as peremptorily to condemn all kinde of swearing, as can be expressed; some of them thinking it was allowed the Jews no otherwise than the Bill of Divorce was, even for the hardnesse of their hearts. There are indeed learned men, as *Sixtus Senensis*, and others, who labour to excuse them; but by their words nothing seemeth to be more plain: yet *Tertullian* who said, *Quemodo pejerare quibus ne jurare est licitum? how shall Christians forswear, to whom it is not lawful to swear?* acknowledgeth, that though the Christians, as *Polycarpus* would dye rather than swear *per genium imperatoris*, which they judged a devil; yet they did, *per salutem imperatoris*, by the life, or safety of the Emperour, or rather God the cause of it. But whatsoever the thoughts of men might be, yet that in some urgent and necessary cases it is lawfull, appeareth,

It is lawfull in  
some cases to  
swear.

Arg. 1.

First, *From the examples of it in Scripture, and that of God; of Angels, of godly and holy men; yea, of Christ also*, say some. That God did swear, appeareth by many places in the Old Testament; and the Apostle improveth it for the comfort of the godly, *Heb. 6. 13*. only his Oath is peculiar, as his Majesty is infinite; for he sweareth by himself, because he hath no greater to swear by. Some Learned men indeed have thought, that it is but an improper and metaphoricall expression, when God is said to swear, and that it is not truly an Oath, but the Apostle doth expressly make his promise, and his Oath two things: Not that there is a need on Gods part, to confirm his word, but on our part, who are subject to evil. Therefore it is our evil, that maketh God to swear. In some of those Oaths, there is an *ellipsis*, or defect; as *Psal 95. 11*. *Unto whom I swear in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest.* If, some make the supply of this Oath to be by execration, then let me not be God; but others more probably make it only for a more vehement attestation, conceiving such an execration undecent to the Majesty of God; as also because his infinite perfection is such as is not capable of any such execration. That Angels did swear, appeareth, *Revel. 10. 6*. where one is said to swear by him that liveth for ever. The eternity of God is the attribute there mentioned, because of the fitnessse of it to the matter in hand, the Angel declaring what would befall the Church in future ages: although it is not likely that Angels swear to one another for the confirmation of any thing; for this was done to *John*, for confirmation of the things foretold. That Christ did swear, some affirm in that expression, *Amen, Amen*, but other Learned men judge not that to be an Oath: but though he did not, it must be granted, that he might, both because as man he was capable of swearing as well as praying to God; and also hereby he might confirm the words that he said, but his wonderfull miracles did abundantly establish that; That holy men also have upon necessary occasions taken an oath, appeareth by many examples of *Paul*. So that if our Saviour had intended an absolute prohibition of all Oaths, this Apostle would have often offended against that command. It is true we told you, that all Oaths suppose sinne, therefore in the state of integrity there would have been no oath; yet *Suarez Disput. de Juram.* thinketh there might have been in that condition, though not so often, because many contingent things might have been known to one, which were not to another. Therefore he would have an Oath, not necessarily to suppose sinne but lesser perfection. It is not worth the while to contend in this. By these examples we see plainly the lawfulnessse of swearing upon urgent occasions.

The



The second Argument is from the commands in the Old Testament, as Deut. 6.13. Deut. 10.20. The third Commandment in forbidding all irreverent use of Gods Name, especially in *swearing*, doth thereby command the lawfull and reverent use of his Name in Oaths; yea, there are promises of it under the Gospel-time, not indeed that it is a duty commanded absolutely, and for it self sake; so it's not commanded as prayer is, but upon supposition, where there is need: Thus in some difficult cases, in contracts between men for purgation of themselves, or discovering the truth, an oath is required, Num. 30, Lev. 5.4. Num. 5.19, 21.

Lastly, The Apostle is clear for this, Heb. 6.16. *For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them a end of strife*: That doth not weaken the proof, because he saith to men, as if he meant only the men of the world, they use such a custome, but Christians do not; for one kinde of men is not there opposed to another; men of the world to beleivers, but men to God: Therefore you heard beleivers did swear, as Paul upon many occasions. Thus Athanasius did by an oath solemnly purge himself to Constantius the Emperour, that he had not spoken any thing against him to his brother Constans. Thus you have Scripture-ground for the lawfulness of it: Neither doth any thing in reason, or the nature of an oath, make it unlawfull: yea, on the contrary God is thereby glorified, and the publike edified. For if you do regard the originall or rise of an Oath, that is for the honour of God; it being introduced upon a faith, that God beholds all things, that he loveth truth, and will be a severe avenger of all those who take his Name in vain. And then if you consider the end of it, it is to *establish righteousness between man and man*; and so is a bond of humane society: And if you say, there is this unfitness in an Oath, because a spiritual thing is ordained to that which is temporall, a superiour for an inferiour, the worship of God to decide an humane business. Because therefore of the awe and reverence to an Oath, some though they have thought it lawfull to swear in sacred things, wherein Gods honour is immediatly concerned, yet judge it unlawfull about many Controversies, and such humane contracts. Hence Basil. Homil. de legend. lib. Gent. commendeth Clinias a Pythagorean, who being fined a very great summe of money, the paying whereof he might have escaped, by taking an oath, yet refused, and would rather suffer that great losse rather than take an oath. But the true answer is by distinguishing of the proxime and ultimate end, though an oath, which is a worship of God have for its proxime end a confirmation of some temporall matter, yet the ultimate end is to glorifie God. Again, there may be this in reason against an Oath, that it seemeth to be a tempting of God, for *can we make God witnesse to a thing when we will*? To this the answer is, that if the intention of the swearer in his oath should be so, to call God to witnesse, that he should immediatly by some signe in a sensible manner demonstrate his notice thereof; This indeed would be to tempt God, though some times Gods judgements do immediatly and visibly fall upon such as take his Name in vain, or invisibly by terrours and horrors of conscience; but that is not, or ought not to be the scope of him that sweareth, but thereby to commit the truth of God, who in his due time here or hereafter will be avenged upon such as swear not aright. Well then, you will say, all this may be granted, but what shall we say to those two places of Scripture, which seem as clearly to forbid all oaths at any time, as clearly, as can be expressed.

The first is, *Matth. 5. 33, 34. &c. But I say unto you, Swear not at all, &c.* where first our Saviour doth universally prohibit, *ὅταν ὀμνέτω ὅλως*, at no time, in nothing, as it might seem. 2. He saith, *Let your yea be yea; and nay, nay:* that



that is, use no more than a bare affirmation, without calling God to witnesse. And lastly, he addeth, *Whatsoever is more, is of sinne*. Now if you compare the Apostle *James*, who alludeth to this of our Saviour, he speaketh more positively, *Jam. 5. 12. Above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath, lest you might think: He forbiddeth swearing by creatures, he addeth, neither by any other oath, lest ye fall into condemnation; or as Grotius, who sheweth the word *ὅρκιστος* is used for falsehood and a lye left by swearing you come to forswearing. Thus you see how fairly these Texts seem to carry it against any kinde of swearing; and by this private Christians are to be admonished, to compare one place of Scripture with another, and *panciora per plura*; for the minding of some Texts only, not comparing them with other, hath caused much error. As in the doctrine of *Universal Redemption*, because some places say, *Christ dyed for all*, they runne away with them, not considering other places which do restrain them, and shew in what sense that *Universality* is to be understood: So because it is said, *Swear not at all, nor by any other oath*, therefore they conclude, that *no swearing is lawfull*. And how guilty then must *Paul* be, who yet bid us follow him as he did *Christ*, for he sweareth often? It is certain then, that our Saviour *Christ* doth not forbid swearing in the generall, for he saith at that time, *he came not to destroy the Law*, and swearing was lawfull in the Old Testament: But the Pharisaicall opinions and glosses for they had brought in corrupt positions.*

1. *That it was lawfull to swear by creatures as well as God.*

2. *If a man did swear by creatures and not by God, he was not guilty of perjury, if he did not fullfill it.* Our Saviour therefore doth expressly condemn both these. This is the summe of this Prohibition, *We are not to swear by creatures*, but yet if we do, because they relate to God, it is by interpretation, as if we did swear by God himself. *Grotius* indeed thinketh, that this place, with that of *James*, is to be understood of promissory oaths: and *Volkelius* the Socinian, he seemeth to say, *That though this place may not forbid all assertory oaths, when necessity requireth, yet promissory oaths are not allowable, when the thing is not certain, and it may not be in our power to fullfill it.* But the Texts comprehend both. It is true, Learned Interpreters go contrary waies, though they both meet in the end. For some say, Our Saviour doth not forbid all oaths, but all oaths by creatures; and some make the Word *ὅρκω* not to relate to swearing, but the words following, *Neither by heaven or earth*, as if it were a distribution of that *ὅρκω*. In this sence, the swearing not at all, or no other oath, is to be limited to creatures, not at all by the creatures, not any oath by them, he doth not forbid us to swear by God in just causes, or before a Magistrate, but by the creatures, and that in our ordinary discourse. For the *Jews* did not think it lawfull to swear by any thing but God, in their solemn Judicatories. Thus it is like that universall *All; Whatsoever they bid you observe, do*, *Matth. 23. 3.* that is, *all lawfull things*; So when *Paul* saith, *I became all things to all men*, that is, in things lawfull and indifferent; he did not become an Idolater: Others they grant, that our Saviour forbiddeth all oaths, as well those by God as by the creatures, because he giveth this reason, *That whosoever sweareth by the creatures sweareth by God in effect*; and then they say, the meaning is, *Swear not at all*, that is, in unnecessary and causelesse matters. The swearing is not so much forbidden, as the frequent and unnecessary use of it. As much as lieth in you, *Swear not at all*; and this is every mans duty.

Thus



Thus we have briefly vindicated that Text. In the next place, how may we swear lawfully? And in this the Prophet *Jeremiah* informeth us of three necessary concomitants of every oath, which all Writers almost upon this Subject take notice of, *Jer. 4. 3. Thou shalt swear, the Lord liveth, (therefore not by any creature.)*

How we may  
swear law-  
fully.

1. *In truth*, that is, be sure that the thing thou swearest be true, not onely in it self, but to thy conscience, that thou knowest the truth of it; or if thou hast not the certainty of it, that thou beleevest it to be so upon good grounds; and against this offend all those who swear falsely, and will bring, as much as lieth in them, God to witnesse a lye.

2. *In judgement*, that is, with *prudence, deliberation, and caution*. Be well advised before thou swearest: and against this offend all common swearers, that swear rashly, and for ordinary things; as also those who swear in passions, and when moved by anger.

3. *In righteousness*, that is, be sure the matter thou swearest, especially in promissory oaths, be lawfull and just, such which is agreeable to Gods Word. To these we may adde two more.

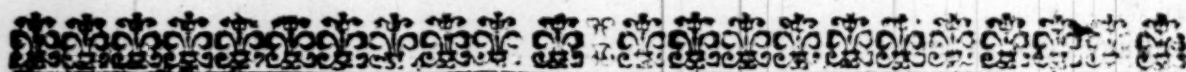
1. That we swear *in faith*, beleeving not only that there is a God, but also that he is an observer of all that we speak or do, and an avenger of such who shall pollute his Name.

And then 2. that we do it *with holy awe and reverence of God upon our spirits*. We are to fear an oath: Oh what trembling and confusion may this work upon rash and passionate common swearers? How often hath the name of God been taken into thy mouth rashly and prophanely? Thou who when thou art to do with a great man in place and honour, dost with all reverence approach to him, how cometh the Majesty of the great God to be thus contemned by thee?

In the last place, *When may we swear?* and that is in the generall, when necessity doth compell, when the truth cannot be found out any other waies; for an oath is to be used when other means are deficient; and more particularly we are then only to swear, when the honour of God is concerned, or Religion and Christianity is falsely accused; and these are publique grounds. To which we may adde the good of the Common-wealth: or we are to swear upon a particular occasion to clear our selves from false accusations and crimes charged upon us, if otherwise our innocency cannot appear; or in the behalf of others, when they shall suffer either in name, life, or estate, and we are required thereunto by the Magistrate, that so justice may proceed.

When we may  
swear.





## S E R M. CXLIII.

## Ordinary Swearing reproved and put to Silence.

2 COR. I. 23.

*Moreover I call God to record upon my soul, &c.*

An use of re-  
proof against  
swearing.

I Shall now conclude the Subject, which the former part of this verse hath afforded unto us. From what hath been delivered concerning an Oath, I proceed to an Use of severe Reproof against that common Epidemicall sinne of ordinary swearing. It is a Nationall sinne; it is the City-sinne, it is the Village-sinne, it is the Family-sinne, it is the rich mans sinne, the poor mans sinne, the old mans sin, the young mans; yea, the childes sin, who learneth to speak and swear together. But if an oath be a religious calling upon God as a witnesse, if it be a sacred worship of his holy Name, where will such prophane contemners of the honour and glory of God appear? What mountains shall cover them from the wrath of God? What shall be done unto thee thou cursing swearing tongue? Not coals of juniper, but of hell fire shall be powred upon thee. We may be amazed and wonder, why such a sinne should be thus universall; for other sins have either pleasure or profit, but this hath none at all. Certainly the custome of such a sinne cometh from the meer wickednesse and prophanenesse of a mans heart, having no fear of God in our souls; for there is no earthly advantage that tempereth to this common ordinary swearing: yet it hath been a generall sinne in the former ages of the Church, as well as now. How zealous and frequent is *Chrysostome* against that ungodly custom of swearing? *Adhuc timeo, quia nullus timer*, saith he. With no lesse godly affection doth *Austin* also set himself against it; yea, it seemeth there were such prophane wretches in his daies as are in ours, who did account *juramentum in ore, magnum & suave aliquid*. And have not we many who judge an oath to be a grace to their language, and deride at such who are so precise as to be offended at such passages? Oh therefore that God would so blesse this Discourse at this time to you, that the prophane swearing tongue may be converted into a praying tongue, a repen ing and confessing tongue: that he who hath sworn may never do so more, but fear an oath as much as hell-fire; and for this purpose consider these motives thereunto.

Motives a-  
gainst swear-  
ing.

1. There is an  
expresse com-  
mand against  
it.

First, That there is an expresse precept and command against such ordinary, rash swearing: and therefore you cannot with any forehead pleade for the lawfulness of it: neither can you say, we did not know that it was a sin to do thus; for Christ hath set a command like a Beacon upon an hill, none can but see it. And it speaks almost as loud as the Trumpet at the day of judgement, none can but hear it. It is *Mat. 5. 34. But I say unto you, Swear not at all, and ver. 37. Let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay: he saith, Swear not at all; so that,*



that if it be but once an unlawfull swearing in all thy life, thou hast transgressed this command; and as one tile of the house neglected, may in time make the whole covering consume; and one rent in the garment let alone, may at last destroy the whole: so even one sinfull oath not repented of or humbled for, may bring on the damnation of the whole man. You see this command is laid down so strictly both in the negative and affirmative part, that some have judged it wholly unlawful to swear in any case; but that you heard was an error on the right hand: yet so farre the command extendeth, as to forbid all customary, idle, rash, and unnecessary swearing. So that the common swearer may as much fear to come near this command, as the *Israelite* did to the mount, when the Law was given. Shall not this command of Christ be more to thee than all custome and example? But *I say unto you* (saith Christ) *Swear not at all*; who dareth then thus contradict Christ? Why dost thou not all the day-long minde thy self of this? Why doth not thy conscience put thee in remembrance of this command? Say, when thou risest, when thou walkest, when thou goest to bed, this commandment to thy self, *Swear not*. The Apostle *James* also because of the great necessity and utility of this precept doth repeat it to beleivers. For as *Luthers* saying is, *principum litera sunt bis vel ter legenda, Princes letters and commands are to be read twice or thrice*. And thus we are daily to meditate on this duty: by this gemination, it should appear, that the heart of man is very ready to break out into this filthy prophanenesse, though there be no alluring motive: Therefore he addeth, *Above all things, my brethren, Swear not; above all things look to your tongue, set a watch before your lips, that you be not found guilty of this sinne*. And whereas the Apostle in the Verses following is to describe the suitable and particular duties to a man afflicted, and to a man merry, he doth seem to remove this sin of swearing in the first place, prohibiting that; for experience telleth us, that when men either are sadly afflicted, and in discontents, or joyful and merry, then they are most prone to forget themselves, and fall into this sinne of *swearing*: therefore the Apostle by way of caution, saith, *above all things swear not*.

A second motive against this common sin of swearing, is from the character and description that is given of a godly man in this very particular; he is one that feareth an oath: he dare not swear in his ordinary discourse, and in unnecessary occasions. Therefore it is a presumptuous thing in thee to flatter thy self, that though thou fallest into this sinne now and then, yet thou hast a good heart, and hopest that thou shalt do as well as the most precise, whom thou slanderest with that ordinary calumny, that though they will not swear, yet they will lye; whereas a godly man hateth both the one and the other. But to our purpose: Let a man pretend never so much devotion, let him be never so confident of his good heart: yet if an ordinary swearer, thou canst not have a principle of grace in thee. For *Solomon* making an opposition between a godly man and a wicked, describing them by contrary characters, *Eccl. 9.2.* concludeth with this, *he that sweareth, and he that feareth an oath*: So that a common swearer is the same with a wicked man and an unclean man: but then the godly man is deciphered by this, that he feareth an oath: observe that he doth not say, *he that sweareth not*, but *he that feareth an oath*. So that a gracious man doth not only abstain from all customary swearing, but he hath an awe and a reverentiall fear in his soul about it; so that the prophane swearer is directly opposite to this character. The Psalmist likewise, *Psa. 24.4.* when he had propounded this Question, *who shall ascend to the holy hill of God, and stand in his holy place?* that is, who is a true member of the Church of God? he answereth by giving severall properties of such; two whereof are, *He who hath not lift up his soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully*. By lifting up the soul to vanity, some learned men understand vain swearing; and then followeth another and greater sinne,

2. A godly man is described to be one fearing an oath.



which is *perjury and false swearing*, which commonly followeth upon the frequent use of the former sinne.

2. It is a great sinne.

The 3<sup>d</sup> motive is, *From the nature of the sin, it is a very hainous and grievous sin.* For this is a rule, all sins against the first Table, are more hainous than those against the 2<sup>d</sup>, *ceteris paribus*, because they are immediatly against God; these against our neighbour, & so by consequence against God. Though therefore oaths fall frequently from thy mouth, without any fear and trembling, yet they are sins of a bloody nature, as appeareth from the 3<sup>d</sup> Commandment, *thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.* It's Gods Name who is infinite in Majesty, who is to be named alwaies with a holy fear and reverence, and shalt thou pollute it in thy wicked mouth? This Commandment doth not only forbid ordinary swearing, but all light and irreverent using of Gods Name; as you have many will say, *O God, O Lord, and O Iesus*: these are great sins, though thou dost not tremble under them. Let the common swearer then know, that his sin is a very hainous one, he contemneth the glory and worship of God. Observe that expression, *Dent. 28. 58. that thou maist fear this glorious and fearfull Name, the Lord thy God.* Do not then flatter thy self, make not this common swearing a light sinne, for sins are weighty, according as God judgeth of them, and this he accounteth an immediate contempt of his Majesty. You would not make use of the name of a great man to witnesse every bable and trifle. *Chrysostome* saith, *Common swearers shew more respect to their new garments, than they do to Gods Name; for they will not wear them but upon solemn occasions.* Whereas these in every trifle, and upon every passion, do highly dishonour God.

4. It hath very great judgements threatened against it.

Fourthly, *As the sin of common swearing is grievous in its nature, so it's threatened in a speciall manner with more than ordinary judgements.* Even in this life God many times doth punish remarkably the common swearer: Hence in the 3<sup>d</sup> command, the threatening is added, *the Lord will not hold him guiltlesse that taketh his Name in vain.* It is a figure *missus*, lesse is said, and more is intended, that is, *he will certainly deal with such a man as a guilty person, he shall find that sin doth provoke God in an high manner.* The Apostle likewise, *1am. 5.* when he had prohibited swearing, addeth, *lest ye fall into condemnation;* the judgement of God lyeth at thy door, and will finde thee out. The place also formerly mentioned, *Zech. 5. 2, 3.* is very dreadfull. There is a flying roll, full of curses, and it is said to go into the house of the swearer, and to continue in the midst of his house, till it hath consumed all. The *Septuagint* and *Greek Expositors* for a flying roll reade a flying hatchet, taking *maggall* for *megillab*; howsoever it is as terrible, as if an Angel should come with an hatchet, and cut down such a mans house. *It's flying*, therefore it cometh from heaven, and so all thy power cannot withstand it: and then it's very broad and long, it will meet with every swearer: and then it is an utter consumption, God will make him such an example, that all who go by, shall say, *here lived such a prophane swearer*: and see what misery and ruine he and his are brought to. *Suarez* speaketh of a prophane blasphemous Proverb, that the Spaniards have to excuse their common oaths, *Qui bene jurat* (by *bene* is meant *multum*) *bene credit*, he that sweareth much, beleeveth well. It is a signe he beleeveth there is a God. And indeed an Atheist cannot swear properly unlesse it be by derision; but that proverb hath blasphemy in it, because the swearer discovereth faith in God rashly, and irreverently: Neither doth he intend in his common discourse to professe faith in God, when he doth swear.

5. It pollutes a nation, and brings Gods judgements upon it.

Fifthly, *This sin of swearing is of so great a guilt that it polluteth a land, it bringeth publique judgements as well as private.* Now all those sins that make the publique obnoxious to Gods judgements, are sins of a grosse nature, *Jer. 23. 10.* because of swearing the land mourneth: and *Hos. 4. 2.* for swearing and lying, &c. therefore the Lord had a controversie with the land. Thus you see swearing,



swearers are like *Jonahs* in a Ship, they bring the Tempests of Gods wrath upon the Land; only when Magistrates make good and severe Laws against swearing, and the under-Officers are diligent in execution (for good laws without execution are like a Bell without a clapper, as one said) then the guilt is taken off the land. And therefore it would be cruelty to the Nation, to spare a particular person; you are unwilling to make the swearer mourn, and thereby you make the land mourn. Therefore let justice be executed upon swearers, that so the nation may not incur Gods displeasure.

Lastly, This sin of common and irreverent swearing is condemned by the very light of nature. Heathens as the *Pythagoreans* have thought it a reproach to a man to swear; his word should be as good as an oath. It is noted of *Hercules*, that he did never swear, and therefore judged by the Heathens most religious. The more inexcusable are those Christians, of whom *Hierom* complaineth, that would use those Latine Oaths, *mehercule*, *medius fidius*. *Plutarch* reports, that when some were to swear among the heathens, they took them out of the house, and made them swear in the open air; one reason whereof was to make them deliberating, and considering before they did so. Will not these heathens rise up in judgement against our common swearers, who yet glory in this Title of Christianity? But let us hear their excuses and cavils, such swearers use to make.

6. It is condemned by the light of nature

1. They say, *It's a custome they have got, and they cannot leave it.* But 1. the more desperate and incurable is thy disease; the more a sinne is habituated, the worse it is; This is not an excuse but an aggravation. Doth a custome in drunkenness or uncleanness, alienate, and not rather inhance? And

The excuses and cavils for swearing answered.

2. Why may not this custome be left? Of all customes we might think this might be parted with most easily; for (as you heard) here is no profit or pleasure to tempt thee. *Chrysostome* answering this very cavill, saith, *That many who have had a custome to stammer, have yet by diligence left it; yea, he speaketh of one who had a custome of lifting up one shoulder higher than another, that by naked swords upon the place to cut him, if he should do so any more, did thereby leave that ill use; and may not this custome of swearing be parted with upon easier terms? Bid thy Wife tell thee of it, thy children, thy servants; saith the same Ancient: and then at last, as many joyning together, do so stop a beast that they catch him, thus (saith he) they will at last weary thee out of this custome.*

In the next place, *Many do so, even all generally (except some few Precisians) do swear, and why should not I do as most do?* But to answer this, the command is clear, *thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil*, *Exo. 23. 2.* Most men go in the broad way to hell, most men will be damned, and therefore this is no plea. Again, we are not to live by examples, but by precepts. What though all use to swear that live by thee? yet the command of Christ is to be more than the examples, even of holy men and Angels themselves; much more then of wicked and ungodly men.

In the third place, *I think no hurt, I do no body any wrong.* But 1. there is no man that sinneth, intendeth to sinne, the will of man cannot be carried out to will evil as it is evil; and so every sinner might excuse himself. Again, if thy oaths do not hurt others, yet they do thy own soul, thou art a murderer of that; and as much as lieth in thee, thou hurtest God, robbing him of the glory due to him. And lastly, thou dost hurt others, for if a father, thy children learn to swear from thee; if a Master, thy servants do; or thy neighbours are encouraged, and the godly they are grieved at it.

In the fourth place, Some pleade, *they swear but sometimes, it is when they are in a passion, when they are provoked.* But, 1. Once is too much, any sinne once committed is enough to damne for ever without repentance. And whereas thou saist, *It is in thy passion, that will not*



excuse; if thou killest a man in thy passion, doth that free thee before God? The stronger thy passions are, the weaker thou art in grace, yea, in reason: Therefore thy condition is the more dangerous, because so easily moved into passion; many grievous sins are sometimes committed in passion, which may make thee ashamed and mourn all thy life long. Again, art thou in a passion? therefore the more unfit to take the Name of God in thy mouth, the greater thy irreverence, by how much more violent the passion is.

In the fifth place, *But when I have sworn in my passion, and do recall myself, I am sorry for it, and ask God forgiveness.* But 1. seeing the sin of irreverent swearing is a very grievous sin, committed immediately against the Majesty of God: it is not an ordinary confession, a transient [*Lord have mercy upon me*] that can be accounted repentance in this case: There must be a serious and solemn setting of our selves to humiliation for sins of this nature. And 2. if ye be so sorrowfull as never to fall into such passionate swearing again, then it is good: but upon the very next provocation, the next passion, you fall a cursing and swearing again, as formerly: so that it is plain thou hast not repented. Thou sinnest, and then askest God forgiveness, and then thou sinnest again: what is this but to play the hypocrite with God, and to mock him.

In the sixth place, say some, *I would not swear, but they will not believe me else.* To this it is answered, happily it is thy fault, they do not think thee a man of truth and honesty; if they did, thy bare word would be enough: and in the next place, who will believe thee the more for thy ordinary swearing? they think it is so common with thee, that thou dost not matter it; and withall, he that is not afraid to dishonour God, I cannot believe him though he should swear a thousand oaths: and indeed who doth regard the word and speeches of a common swearer that is wise and prudent?

Lastly, Some excuse themselves, *That they are but petty oaths, they do not take Gods Name in vain; their oaths are petty oaths, by their faith and troth; and is that such an offence?* To answer this, 1. there is no petty oath, no more than a petty God, or a petty damnation. And 2. While you think to honour God, you dishonour him; out of reverence you will not swear by him, but by a creature; this is more highly to offend him, while you give that which is due to him, to a creature. And therefore 3. here is not only unlawful swearing in those oaths, but idolatry also. *Is your faith a God? Is your troth a God? Is your faith an alseeing witnesse?* Can that damn thee, if thou swear falsely? Therefore in these oaths you do not only sin, but commit idolatry also.



## SERM. CXLIV.

*Of the holy Prudence that Ministerial Power is to be managed with.*

2 COR. I. 23.

*That to spare you, I came not as yet to Corinth.*

**T**He next thing to be considered in this Text, is the *Matter* of the Oath, which is indeed a full answer to the calumny charged upon him, *vers. 17.* about his lightnesse and inconstancy in altering of his purpose concerning his coming to them. In this he sheweth the true reason, that there was no fault in him; but the blame that was, was to be laid at their doors; they were not prepared, and fitted for his coming; therefore he saith, *To spare you, I did not yet come to Corinth.* It was not then any mutability or carnal principles that moved him herein; but a prudent and mercifull ordering of his coming to them, for their spiritual good. Should he have visited them according to his promise, he would have come with a rod, and not in the spirit of meeknesse, as 1 Cor. 4. 21. and so his presence would have been very ungratefull, and therefore he forbearth a while, to see whether his former Epistle might work a full humiliation and reformation amongst them, being unwilling to proceed to further and more severe censures. And although there were some only of the *Corinthians*, who had thus sinned, and were accordingly to be censured, yet he saith *you* in the general, because the matter did concern the whole Church. The reason then given of delaying his coming, is, *That he might spare them.* This denoteth the paternal authority and power that *Paul* had, to admonish and censure obstinate offenders. For it is an expression from a father, as *Mal. 3. 17.* *I will spare them, as a father spareth his own sonne.* Thus it is often applied unto God, who ruleth in the world, as a Judge. *Jon. 4. 11.* *Should I not spare Nineveh?* And he is said, *Not to spare the Angels, and the old world,* 2 Pet. 2. 4. So that you see the Apostle doth hereby declare that power which God hath given him: but because he saith afterwards, 2 Cor. 10. 8. that *this authority is given for edification and not destruction*, which he repeateth, 2 Cor. 13. 10. as being very memorable and considerable, therefore he manageth this power with all wisdom and tendernesse, that so he may attain his end of edification, that in stead of converting, he doth not more harden men in impiety, as an indiscreet and unseasonable exercising of ministerial power may do. But you will say, This seemeth to be no good reason. For if *Paul* had gone to *Corinth*, he might have spared them: howsoever *Paul* surely did not fear his passions would prevail over his judgement, or his zeal devour his prudence. That is true, but yet if he had gone to *Corinth*, and found them obstinate and unhumbled, as he feared he should, 2 Cor. 12. 21. then if he did not put forth the power God had given him to punish their disobedience, his authority would have been condemned, and withall the wicked would have been hardened more in their impiety;



piety, and the godly who desired godly order in the Church would have been discouraged. Therefore to prevent this necessary severity, he doth in this Epistle, as in the former, admonish them, and warn them; so that if possible, they might of themselves reforme, and so prevent the exercise of his power amongst them. For observe what he saith, 2 Cor. 13. 2. *I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present the second time; and being absent now, I write to them, which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that if I come again, I will not spare.* As then it is Gods goodnesse and patience to threaten us with hell and damnation, that so we might prevent them: Thus doth the Apostle imitate the patience of God herein, threatening them with the exercise of Church-power upon them, that being thereby awakened, and repenting, there may be no need of it. From whence observe,

Ministerial power ought to be managed with much holy prudence and commiseration.

*That the ministerial power, which God giveth the Officers of his Church, ought to be managed with much holy prudence and commiseration.*

The end of their power is alwayes to be in their minde; which is *edification*, and so are accordingly to use means proportionably thereunto, lest in stead of *edification* there be *destruction*.

That God hath given the Ministers of his Gospel an ecclesiastical or Church-power, as also what the nature of it is, the acts and exercise of it; as also the objects to whom it extends, I shall here take for granted; there will be a more seasonable occasion to treat of these things in some ensuing passages of the Epistle. I shall only at this time briefly speak to this particular manner of *managing* it, which is specified in the Text; and that is, *with holy prudence and pity, with much long-suffering and meeknesse.* And

1. What is meant by holy prudence.

1. Hereby is excluded all worldly policy.

First, *When we call it an holy prudence and moderation; let us consider what is meant hereby.* And

First, *We exclude carnal craft, and worldly policy.* When men make use of Church-power, and the Ordinances of Christ onely for carnal ends, and to advance themselves and their party thereby. It was farre from *Paul* to make use of any such prophane policy; therefore he often proclaimeth the integrity of his heart and intentions, that he was not in the number of those, *who did corrupt the word of God*, 2 Cor. 2. 17. & Chap. 3. 2. he there renounceth the *hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftinesse,-----but commending our selves to every mans conscience in the sight of God.* So that there is a vast difference between godly prudence, which studieth to use the choicest means, and most fit for the spiritual good of others, and a crafty politick way, indulging men in their lusts, that so they may obtain their corrupt intentions. Our Saviour speaketh very notably, when he saith, (*Luke 16. 8.*) *The children of this world are wiser in their generation, than the children of light.* Though they be light, yet they have not that subtil eye-sight in the things of the world; but yet do farre surpasse the greatest *Ahitophel* in the world in spiritual things: crafty and worldly wise men, are like the owls that see best in the dark; but when the Sunne shineth, then their eyes are dazelled. Thus such men in outward affairs, in evil contrivements, are very subtil, but as dull as stocks and stones in any heavenly things. Let not then any under this pretence of holy prudence in Church-power, encourage himself in carnal and worldly craftinesse: the Church of *Rome* is justly branded for this. For in antiquity, when any Church had excommunicated some for their prophanenesse and ill demeanours, who appealing to the Church of *Rome* for redresse, hereby to advance their power, they would encourage such, and maintain them against those Church-officers who had cast them out. This carnal craft and ungodly policy, is used by too many Officers in the Church, that contemn Christs order, that despise all



all wholesome means to true piety, that thereby they may satisfie their earthly ends. It is true, when the faithfull Ministers of Christ do effectually move for the purity of Ordinances, and the promoting of godlinesse among their people, there are those who will maliciously traduce them for carnal and selfe-seeking ends, as if they proceeded wholly upon subtilty and policy, but the searcher of hearts witnesseth to their sincerity, and so they comfortably proceed in Christs worke, maugre all opposition. It's *holy prudence* then, not *carnal policy*, which must manage ministerial power.

Secondly, *When we require holy prudence and meeknesse, we do not hereby exclude zeal*; as if a man should not with much fervency and ardour of spirit set himself for the truth of God, as also against the kingdome of sinne and Satan. No, it cannot be heavenly prudence, unlesse it be accompanied with this *zeale*. As *zeale* must be with knowledge and discretion; so must knowledge be with *zeale*. They must be as *Castor and Pollux*, alwayes appearing together, which was represented in the Sacrifice, which was to have salt, as well as fire. Thus (*Rom. 12.*) *We are to be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.* And it is the Lord Christ, who said, *The zeale of thy house hath eaten me up*, *Joh. 12.17.* Here is a notable example for all godly Ministers. The zeale for Gods glory, is even to consume them (as it were) as the fat of the Sacrifice was burnt in the fire to the Lord: to which some think our Saviour doth allude in that expression. We are to come in the spirit of *Elijah*, even to be carried in a fiery Chariot. And truly without this zeale for God, a man is but a lump of earth. It is true, we must distinguish *holy zeale* from our owne *passions*, and *cholerick distempers*, but that which is the pure fire of Gods Spirit kindled in our hearts, as it doth greatly conduce to Gods glory, so it doth exceedingly tend to our own comfort. Let therefore those be magnified for wise and moderate men; let them be admired, as so many Angels, that live in a lukewarm and neutral way; they will reprove no sinne; they will provoke no man to frowne upon them; but (alas) the issue will discover their folly. Oh the throbs and pangs of conscience some have had, when going out of the world, for this very particular, because they did not with more zeale and forwardnesse appear for God. And on the other side, that Minister who hath with faithfull zeale, according to the words direction, behaved himself in his ministerial labours, though great ones have frowned at him, though malicious people have vexed him, yet he dieth full of comfort. For they that are filled with the Spirit of God by zeale in their life time, are many times filled with heavenly consolations in their death.

2. Zeal is not excluded.

Lastly, *This holy prudence, is not to be confounded with that sinfull man-pleasing, which is in many, indulging men in their lusts, and hardening them thereby in their impieties.* Though the Apostle said, *1 Corin. 10. 33. That he pleased all men, in all things, not seeking his owne profit*; yet that is not to be understood in sinfull things; for in that respect he saith, *Galat. 1. 10. If he pleased men, he should not be the servant of Christ*; but in lawfull things he did condescend to those that were weak, and would not alwayes use his own liberty, which he might, being strong in judgement; but this doth nothing advantage such who have a flattering, complying way with men in their wickednesse, like those false prophets of old, that daubed with untempered mortar, and cried *Peace, peace to him, whom God hath promised no peace.* This is highly offending God. Yet how many are admired, because they have the love of wicked and ungodly men, that they can keepe in with them? Whereas this is not, because they have large parts,

3. It is not to be confounded with man-pleasing.



parts, but a large conscience; and that which some make to be a very wise man, is indeed to be a man without any conscience. But I must not enlarge in this.

Wherein holy  
prudence doth  
consist.

1. In discover-  
ing our love  
to their per-  
sons to be the  
ground of all  
our proceed-  
ings.

In the second place therefore we are to shew, *Wherein this holy prudence doth consist.* And

First, *In discovering our love to their persons, to be the ground of all our proceedings.* If we reprove them, it is love; if we admonish them, it is love; if we do not admit them to the dreadful mysteries of Christ, it is love. *Dilige & loquere quod vis*, saith *Austin*; *Love, and then say what ye will.* This made the Apostle use a sacred oath at this time, to shew it was his love to them, and no sinfull end, that made him forbear his coming; so great a matter is it to be perswaded that what the Ministers of the Gospel doe, though it distaste and displease us, yet it is out of their conscience to God, and love to us.

2. In observing  
the fittest sea-  
sons for the  
exercise of  
power.

Secondly, *Holy prudence lieth in this, when we observe the fit seasons and opportunities for exercising our power, which God hath given us; otherwise if unseasonably administred, it may doe more hurt than good.* It is special prudence to time it well; in this sense it is good to be a *time-server*, as some read that passage, *δελαιεν καιρω*, Rom. 12. applying it to this sense. *Abigail* would not speak to her husband in his drunken senselesse fit, *Isai. 50. 4.* *The tongue of the learned is to speake a word in season*; though that be chiefly to be applied, to a word of comfort, yet a word of reproof in season, doth more good than ten thousand unseasonably spoken. Such a word so spoken, is said to be like *Apples of gold in pictures of silver*, Prov. 25. 11. wherein is implied both preciousnesse and excellency, as also delight and refreshment. A *fit word*, is called in the Hebrew, *A word upon the wheelles* (as some thinke) because of the smoothnesse and readinesse of it to enter into the hearts of others. Some render it, *A word with its two faces*, as looking on both sides, which is the property of prudence: and the next verse following sheweth how happy it is, when a wise reproof, and an obedient ear meet together; such an obedient ear is more comely and glorious, than any ear-jewel. As then the Bee doth not every day; but in fit seasons gather its honey; so doth a prudent Minister of the Gospel. Thus *Solomon*, Eccles. 12. 9, 10. *Because the preacher was wise, he sought out acceptable words.* Some trees that blossome last, are yet said to have their fruit first; which sheweth, that it is not the first or sudden speaking, but the most opportune, that doth the greatest good; especially in reproof this is most necessary, because it is said, *Genus quoddam Martyrii est*, &c. *It is a kinde of Martyrdome to take a reproof patiently.*

3. In our dis-  
cerning of sins.

Thirdly, *Our prudence is scene, when we discern of sinnes, not judging little and great alike.* To excommunicate for lesser faults, is (saith *Gerson*) *To strike off a flie from a mans fore-head with a beetle.* The remedy is more dangerous than the disease. They were grosse sinnes that the Apostle is thus zealous against in the *Corinthians*. Again, great sinnes are to be distinguished, whether personal in some few, or publick and over-spreading all. For when sinne hath infected a multitude, though it be a Ministers duty to bring them out of such an epidemical disease, and to withstand the torrent of such impiety, wherein God many times giveth unexpected and wonderfull successe, as appeareth in *Luther*, to whom one said, *Abi in cellam, & dic miserere mei Domine*, thinking it in vain to stirre, though God vouchsafed unexpected effects to his labours, yet we are with more prudence to endeavour the reformation of a multitude, and not to be overhasty, lest we hinder that good which otherwise might be done. This was *Austin's* knowne counsell to a

Bishop



Bishop, who desired his advice about the sinne of drunkennesse, which was general in all, he adviseth him to proceed by degrees, and *Monendo magis quam minando*, &c. But the next Chapter may give occasion to greater enlargement in this point.

Fourthly, *Prudence is scene about the order of the meanes which God hath appointed to reclaime others.* In private or personal sinnes, that is a golden rule full of wisdom, which our Saviour prescribeth, *Matth. 18. 15, 16, &c.* To deale with such an offending brother first *alone*, and as we finde him obstinate, so to proceed to a more publick way. To give *Elleboro* or *Opium* at first, is too violent a remedy; such that do so, are no wise Physicians to mens souls.

Fifthly, *It's a special part of prudence in our reproof of others, or other distastfull exercises to flesh and blood, to mingle a due praise, for what is lovely and good in them.* To acknowledge any gift that God hath bestowed upon them, as *Paul* doth often, joyning himself with other believers, sometimes as if they were not inferiour to him; he doth not only use loving compellations of *brethren* and *children*, but also doth with much sympathy take their infirmities and sins as it were upon himself.

Lastly, *Holy prudence doth not onely make a Minister looke to the good that may come, but the evil also that may probably issue.* For although our duty is to be done, though the world shall fall upon our heads, yet we must consider, whether when so many evils are in great probability attending the action, whether it be a duty then, or no. It's a known passage of one *Audas* a Bishop, who out of great zeale, set a *Persian* Temple on fire, wherein they worshipped *mi*, or fire, as a god, which did so enrage the *Persian* King, that he commanded the Bishop to build the Temple againe, or else he would put him to death. But the Bishop refusing, not onely he himself suffered, but thereby brought a most cruell persecution upon many Christians. Now this fact is justly condemned, as a most indiscreet and rash action; he did not consider what evil would fall upon it. Although *Sozomene* saith of him, *That he condemned his indiscretion that he demolished the Temple, but admired his zeale and constancy, that he would die rather than build it up againe.* Many good actions seeming full of zeale, for want of a due consideration, have brought more evil, than done good: yea have increased that evil the more, which they have endeavoured to extinguish. Hence our Saviour giveth us wise counsel, *Matth. 7. 6. Give not that which is holy unto the doggs, nor cast ye your pearles before swine, lest they trample them under feet, and turne againe and rent ye.* Many times both the pearle, and the Minister also, at least the exercise of his Ministry is destroyed, because he did not consider that some persons are swine and doggs, maliciously endeavouring all evil against you, if they be provoked.

The first Use is *Of Direction*, to such who intend the Office of the Ministry, not onely to labour after learning and godlinesse, but prudence also. Even *Luther* himselfe, though raised up by God for so great a worke, doth sometimes bewaile his imprudence and folly. "I many times (saith he) doe rashly; and while I thinke to doe good, I doe hurt, and then I am troubled, beseeching God to forgive me this imprudence. If a man have not so much learning, yet if he have godlinesse and prudence, he may doe more good than more eminent Scholars. As it's noted of *Atticus* Bishop of *Constantinople* (one of the successours of *Chrysostome*) that he was farre inferiour to *Chrysostome* for learning and abilities, yet did more good in his Office by his prudence,

S f f f

being

4. In the ordering of means.

5. In the mingling of due praise.

6. In looking to the evil as, well as the good that may come.



being a very wise man, than he did. For *Chrysostome*, though so excellent a man, was very subject to passion; and being of a plaine, single heart, did not discern of men, as he should doe; by which meanes his adversaries prevailed over him, so to have him ejected from his place at last. But *Ambrose* continued many years in that place, by his prudence and wisdom, yet a godly man also.

But how shall we have this wisdom?

We must earnestly pray to God for it, as the Apostle directeth, *James* 1. and *Solomon* practised. And withall, we must reade and study the Scripture much, following that as a starre.

And lastly, It is good to be acquainted with *Ecclesiasticall History*. For both from the godlinesse, wisdom, and also from the miscarriages of those that are mentioned, we may get experience; and they may be as so many pillars of salt to season us. *Lege Historiam, ne fias Historia*. And if those who would get civil prudence, be required to reade humane Histories, and to observe all occurrences therein, how much rather are the Ministers of the Gospel to exercise themselves in Ecclesiastical History, not onely to know what was done formerly, or to be able to speak about the Ancients, when they lived, and what their Doctrine was; but also to get prudence, by observing either their wise deportments, or imprudent miscarriages.

*Use 2. Of Instruction.* Of what consequence it is for a people to be perswaded of the love and faithfull intentions of their Pastors to their souls good; not to thinke they seeke themselves, they ambitiously affect great things over them. For this made *Paul* take this solemne Oath in the Text, which he would not have done, had not the occasion been urgent. What is it that maketh the ministerial labours, either in preaching or establishing good order among their flock be so disgusted and disrelished, but because they will not be convinced of the Ministers faithfull aimes, and their great love in all this?





SERM. CXLV.

Of Ministers power over the People.

2 COR. I. 24.

*Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy; for by faith ye stand.*

**T**HIS Text is brought in by way of correction, as the Rhetoricians figure is called. For having said, *That to spare them, he did not yet come to Corinth*, and he that spareth may also punish; lest he should seem hereby to assume to himself some absolute dominion, and lordly power over them, he addeth, *Not that we have dominion over your faith*. Because in the Greek it is *ἐπὶ τῆς πίστεως*; Erasmus thinketh the Preposition *ἐπὶ* is to be understood; as if the sense were, *We have not dominion over you, for your faiths sake*. Whereupon he enlargeth himself, that none is to be compelled to the faith; and those (saith he) who are vehement herein, it is that their Kingdom might be more enlarged. Hence he wisheth that Text in *Peter*, 1 Pet. 5. 3. *Not being lords over Gods heritage, &c.* were written upon all Bishops halls or palaces, *Vel aureis literis*, even in golden letters. The Greek word is *κυριεύουσιν*; therefore when we urge that place of our Saviours, reproving the ambition of the Disciples, (*Mat. 20. 25. The Gentiles exercise dominion, but so shall not ye*) against the political dominion of the Pope and his Bishops, *Bellarmines* solution is frigid. It is (saith he) *κατακυριεύουσιν* in the Greek, which signifieth a *tyrannical exercise of any power*; as if such an imperious abuse of power, not the power it self were condemned. But though *κατα* doth sometimes aggravate, yet that it doth not there, appeareth in that the same passage, in *Luk. 22. 25.* is related by the simple Verb *κυριεύουσιν*, and here in the Text is not *κατα*, but *κυριεύουσιν*. The Apostle then doth here disclaim all absolute dominion over their faith, all lordliness over their consciences; he may not dictate, or prescribe to them what he pleaseth. Now if *Paul*, so eminent an Apostle, made so not *by men*, but having immediate revelation from God, who was also infallible in his Doctrine; doth yet disclaim this dominion; What mortal man may do it? What Minister is equal to *Paul*? Yea this *Church of Corinth*, was wholly planted by him, they were converted by him; and therefore he might plead more sovereignty over them, being not an instructor, but a father, rather than other; yet for all that he challengeth no such primacy. So that this Text confoundeth all Papal Church-government, with the upholders thereof. For how abominable are the expressions of the Popish flatterers? affirming, *That the Pope hath the same tribunal with Christ, that he can dispense against Paul's Epistles, that he can do any thing, prater, super and extra jus; and that he is to judge all, but to be judged of none*, with such kind of blasphemies. Yea *Bellarmino* doth apply that prophecy of *Isaiah*, *Behold I lay in Sion a foundation-stone*, which doth directly belong to Christ, even unto the Pope, though secondarily, but most blasphemously. The Observation is,

S f f f 2

That



Ministers have  
no dominion  
over the faith  
of believers.

*That though Christ hath invested the Officers of the Church, with some kinde of ministerial power, yet they have not thereby any dominion over the faith of believers.*

They may not preach what they will, nor command, and dictate what they will. Infomuch that although their Pastors say, Virtue is a vice, and vice a virtue, yet the people are bound to believe it, as *Bellarmino* in his first Edition affirmed, but afterwards left it out. That all such dominion by compulsion and force is excluded from the Ministry, appeareth plainly by those two Texts, *Luk. 22. 15. & 1 Pet. 5. 2.* Those places do not forbid such a fatherly pastor-like power, that Christ hath bestowed upon his Church-officers, but a civil domination, as also an ecclesiastical-magisterial power in the Church, as if we were to believe, because they say so. No our Saviour absolutely prohibiteth that, when he saith, *Be ye not called masters, for one is your master, even Christ, Mat. 23. 10.* Where also we are commanded, *to call no man father.* Hence the Papists exceedingly erre, in calling those Ancients *Fathers*, thereby urging their dominion over our faith, as if we were bound to believe, what ever a Father saith. Indeed if by Father we mean no more, than an Ancient, who hath lived long before us; so the word may be allowed; but they call them so in a doctrinal and authoritative respect, as if we might not gain-say them, no more than sonnes their father; but this doth contradict our Saviours command. Christ then is the onely Lord, and Head of his Church; whatsoever he saith, we are commanded to hear him, and that for his own authority; there is no disputing, no doubting, no examination allowed of what he saith: but all Ministers since the Apostles dayes are subject to errour, and may be deceived, and withall by their office they are stewards, not lords in the family; they are Embassadors onely, not Princes: Now such have a limited power, they cannot do any thing of themselves, any further than their Commission extends, their power doth not extend. And truly (as was said) if the Apostles, though infallible, would not challenge such a dominion, such a commanding power in the Church, (*1 Cor. 7. 6. I speak this not by commandment*) but referreth all his doctrine, his power, and what he did to Christ, as the original; yea Christ as Mediator referred his doctrine and will to the Father. What shall become of those ambitious *Diotrephesses*, who affect a greater power in the Church? But the Doctrine needeth explication in several particulars. And

1. What is not  
forbidden in  
this doctrine.

1. Not the  
lawfull eccle-  
siastical pow-  
er in dispen-  
sing ordina-  
ces.

First, Let us see negatively, *What is not forbidden or disclaimed by the Apostles,* and then positively. What is for the negative,

1. *The Apostle doth not here exclude that lawfull Ecclesiastical power which the Ministers of God have after a spiritual manner in dispensing of the Ordinances appointed by Christ.* Some indeed think it is not power or authority, but a gift. Others, that all their power is swallowed up by the Magistrate, when he becometh Christian; but certainly Christ appointed Pastors and Teachers in his Church till his second coming, and gave them power to preach the Word, to administer Sacraments, to exercise Church-discipline, as might at large be proved, if this were a fit occasion. The Apostle attributeth to himself a power once or twice; only he saith, it is for edification, not destruction, *2 Cor. 13. 10.* And he telleth these *Corinthians*, *If he come again, he will not spare,* *2 Cor. 13. 2. & 2 Cor. 10. 6.* he saith, *He was in a readinesse to revenge all disobedience:* And that command of his, *To cast out the incestuous person,* argued his power. Yea the names given them, that they are called *Pastors* and *Rulers*, and that the people are to obey them, argue plainly there is a spiritual ministerial power appointed by Christ in his Church. Of which more largely (God assisting) in subsequent passages.

2. Neither



2. Neither doth this expression imply, *That the Ministers of the Gospel have their power from the people.* As if they were *Embassadors* in their name, and acted with a power derived from them, as some have pleaded; for the office is of Christ, the designation and application of the person to the office, is by the Ministry of the Church, but they have not the office it self from them. It's true, they are sometimes called, *The servants of the Church*, but that is *finaliter*, not *originaliter*, because the end of their office is for the good of the people; They have not these Offices for their own honour and dignity, but meerly for the good of others. So that although in respect of Christ, they are meerly Ministers and servants, yet in respect of the Church and the people, they are Fathers and Pastors, having a spiritual rule over them.

2. Neither doth it imply, that Ministers have their power from the people.

3. Neither doth this expression encourage a *licentious boundlesse questioning of the Doctrine*, that the Ministers of the Gospel do deliver, because they are not infallible, because they are not commanded absolutely to depend on them. Therefore some runne into a disorderly extream, cavilling and questioning every thing that is taught. But you must know, that although every Christian be allowed a judgement of discretion, and he is by his own faith to be saved. Hence the *Bereans* are accounted *more noble*, because they compared the Doctrine delivered with the Scriptures; yet withall they are commanded to *hear the Ministers, highly to esteem of them for the workes sake; To obey them, and to submit themselves to them.* So that the liberty a believer is allowed must not tend to the overthrow of the office of the Ministry. It is true, here is much wisdom and grace required in bounding the peoples liberty, and yet asserting their dependance upon the Ministers whom God hath set over them, and from whom they are to seek direction and guidance: but this work is not to be done here. It is certain, they may mutually stand together; yea they were appointed by God for the mutual good of each other; and therefore it's nothing but corruption that maketh a contrariety herein; sometimes by the Ministers pride, and affectation of power; and sometimes by the peoples pride and conceitednesse, whereby they refuse humbly to submit to such order and officers as God hath commanded them. But this deserveth a large Tractate. For all evil ariseth in the Church, because these bounds are transgressed. In some ages the officers tyranny, in other ages the peoples licentiousness have much hindered the power of godliness, and the beauty of Ordinances.

3. Neither doth it encourage a boundlesse questioning of a Ministers doctrine.

Lastly, *By this is not excluded that duty, whereby Ministers ought with holy zeal and courage, reprove sinne, and that in the greatest of men.* Yea and whosoever are obstinate and impenitent sinners to refuse the administration of the seals of Church-communion unto them. When the Apostle commanded this *incestuous person* (whom some think to be a man of great place among the *Corinthians*) to be cast out, when he delivered *Hymenaeus* and *Philetus* up to Satan; when he commands, *If any walk disorderly, to withdraw from such*, 2 Thess. 3. 6. *Yea and if any obey not his word, to note, or signifie such a man.* All these are demonstrations of power, but not lordly dominion; yea where reproof, admonition, and excommunication are rightly administred to a spiritual heart awakened, they become more dreadfull than civil, or bodily punishments; because what is done this way, God bindeth in Heaven; God casteth such out of his communion, and commands them, as *David* to *Absolom*, not to come in his presence. Thus the Apostle doth not exclude these necessary ministerial duties, although distastfull to flesh and blood. Yea though corrupt persons account them nothing, but the expression of lordlinesse. Even as when *Lot* reprov'd those wicked *Sodomites*, they replied, *He would be a Judge over them*, Gen. 19. 9. and *Moses*, when he rebuked the *Hebrews*, striving one with another. How scornfully did the injurious person answer him? *Who made thee a Prince and a Judge over us?* Exod. 2. 14. By this we see, how imbred a thing it is in all sinners, if they

4. Here is not excluded the Ministers duty to reprove sin.



they be reprov'd and controll'd in their wickedness, to account all nothing but dominion and lordliness. Even the holy Government of the Church appointed by Christ for spiritual and supernatural ends, and so wholly for the good of those that go astray, yet by evil men hath been complained of, as worse than *Turkish slavery*. How little do such men consider, what their Christianity obligeth them unto? What it is to be baptized into the name of Christ, and to acknowledge him the Head, Lord, and Governour of his Church? For if they did, they would not say, *Let us break his bonds, and cast his cords away from us*. Is not the Discipline of Christ to be received, as well as his Doctrine? Did not the Apostle rejoice to behold the faith and order of the *Colossians*? Col. 2. 5.

2. What is forbidden in it.

1. All abuse of lawfull power

Thus you see what is not excluded. Let us then consider in the next place, *What the Apostle doth positively shut out by this negative expression, Not that we have dominion over you*. And

1. *It doth exclude all abuse and excess even of lawfull power*. For those who are true officers of Christ, having a lawfull power committed to them, may yet abuse it, they may shew much rashness, too much austerity in the exercise of it. Therefore in the next Chapter, we see this holy Apostle, though zealous to have this *incestuous person* cast out, yet when truly humbled and repenting, he is no less careful to have him received again, requiring them to confirm their love to him, lest he should be *swallowed up with too much grief*. Some learned men have thought, that the primitive Bishops did exceed in their austerity herein, as appeareth by many Canons made against some sinners, who for two or three years were not to be received into Church-communion, though truly repenting; yet some excuse them, because the condition of the times did then, they say, require it, that the Churches zeal against sinne, might vindicate her against those abominable calumnies cast upon her by the *Heathens*, as if she did secretly nourish all impiety. And although she was thus severe, yet the *Novatians* did refuse communion with the Church, as being too remisse, in that she would at any time receive such, who through fear apostatized in time of persecution, though never so sincerely manifesting their humiliation. Thus all unlawful austerity, even in lawfull power, is excluded.

2 All civil and political government.

2. *By this the Apostle doth disclaim all civil and political Government*. Hence the word *κύριος*, signifieth one in *ἐξουσία* *ἐκείνων*, saith *Varinus*; and one that hath *αὐτοκράτορα, καὶ ἀντιδύναμις* *δυναμὶς*, saith *Budans*. The Apostles did not invade the Magistrates office, neither would Christ the fountain of all Church-power, be a divider of an inheritance. A civil power is coactive and compelling by force, which Church-power is not. And although *Bellarmino* say, *Ecclesiastical power is ridiculous and in vain, if it may not civilly compell*. Yea a prophane Papist saith, *Our Lord Christ had been indiscreet, if he had not given this temporal power also*. Yet they speak this according to their humane apprehensions, transforming Christs kingdom into an earthly and external one.

3. All magisterial power over consciences.

3. *Hereby he excludeth a magisterial power, though in an ecclesiastical way, over consciences*. That is, he doth not assume to himself to be Lord in the Church, but an Embassador or Steward only. He doth not say, his Doctrine is his, the Sacraments are his; *but as he received of the Lord, so he delivered to them*. And this is that, for which the Protestants accuse the *Roman Church*, That their Officers arrogate to themselves a Magisterial power in the Church, pleading an infallibility in Doctrine, by which they anathematize all as hereticks, who will not subscribe thereunto. The Protestants doe acknowledge a ministerial power, but they will have a magisterial one. There must be a supream visible Judge in the Church (say they) as there is in Commonwealths; else Christ hath not wisely provided in his Church a sufficient remedy against all heresies and schisms.

Lastly,



Lastly, By this he doth exclude any sinfull or wicked end. As if he did make the Church subservient to any corrupt interest of his own. Officers are for the Church, the Church is not for them. He that hath a lordly government or despotical, saith *Aristotle*, administreth it, *ως οτι σκοπεῖται οὐκ ἐν κοινῷ*. It's not the publick good, but the personal good he looketh at: it is not *Res publica*, but *Res propria*. All tyrannical administrations are for the tyrants profit, they *Non prosunt ut prosint*; whereas good Governours, they relate to the publick good, knowing they are for it, not it for them. And thus it is in Church-officers, all their names are names of care, of diligence and labour. God hath not set them there for their carnal advantages, as if the people were made for them; but they are to promote the Kingdome of Christ, and to advance the souls of their hearers. Alas, the Church is Christs Spouse, not theirs; it's Christs flock, not theirs; they died not for it, they were not crucified for it; neither are believers baptized into their name, but the name of Christ.

*Use of Instruction.* How happy and blessed a thing it is to see the Church of God in unity between Pastors and people; the Officers not abusing their power to ambition and tyranny; nor the people their liberty to licentiousnesse and wantonnesse; when Pastors and people strive not about their respective power, but who shall most faithfully discharge their duties to one another. All disorder in the Church hath for the most part come in at this breach. If a Church be *Plebs adunata clero*, as *Cyprian* said, Church and people united together, then what goeth to the dissolving of this, tendeth to the destruction of the Church it self. How much doth *Ignatius* (if they be his genuine Epistles) presse this subjection of people to Pastors? And the Apostle *Peter* doth as earnestly presse a loving and meek government in Officers. And no doubt, when God is angry with a people, then he sends an evil spirit; as between *Abimelech* and the *Shechemites*, which tendeth to the consumption of both. Let Ministers therefore carefully avoid all affectation of unlawfull power, and people of unlawfull liberty. Let Pastours looke upon their people, as the Spouse of Christ, as purchased by his blood, and this will keepe them from lordly dominion; and let people look upon Pastours, as the Officers of Christ, coming in his name to them; and this will make them honour them, and have them in high esteeme, both for their office, and works sake. But other parts of this Epistle will provoke to greater enlargement herein.





## S E R M. CXLVI.

*The Comforting of the afflicted, one great part of a  
Ministers work.*

2 COR. I. 24.

*But are helpers of your joy.*

**T**He Apostle having removed the negative in his Ministerial power, he cometh to affirm the positive, which is, *That we are helpers of your joy*; *συνεργοί*, *helpers or co-workers*; for the word relateth to a concurrence with others, and therefore by some is made to respect the *Corinthians* themselves, as if he did *work with them* for the establishing of their joy. Others relate it to his fellow-Ministers and workmen in the Lord, in which sense he often speaketh of his *συνεργοί*, *Rom. 16. 21. Phil. 1. 2. & 24. Phil. 4. 3.* and this is very probable. But then 3. others make it to referre to God, as if the Apostles did work with God but ministerially and subordinately, to the salvation of men; and this the Apostle plainly affirmeth, *1 Cor. 3. 9.* This also may be granted; and then the Apostles scope is to shew that they have not indeed any dominion; but yet lest any should judge them therefore uselesse, and conclude they have no power at all, therefore he addeth, *We are helpers and Ministers under God.* For though God immediatly created the world, without any instruments, yet he doth not so in propagation of the Gospel. Therefore *Stapleton* need not be in such rage at *Calvin*, for not taking notice of the word, or at *Beza* for rendring it *helpers*; seeing that *Beza* doth not thereby exclude a ministerial help, but a magisteriall authority, which the Papall party pleade for, calling it *ἡγεμονία*, whereas it is rather *ἡσποδιακονία* or *ἡσποδία*. Neither doth the Ministry immediatly produce spirituall effects in the hearts of hearers, though subordinately only, but doth externally apply the means of grace, in the exercise whereof God doth put forth his glorious power. The next thing considerable is the object of this, *We are helpers of your joy.* We might have thought he would rather have said *your grace*, or *your faith*; but he saith *joy*, by which some understand *heaven* and *happinesse*, as the word is used, *Heb. 12. 1. Matth. 25. 23.* This indeed is necessarily implied, and so must not be excluded: but the proxime and immediate sense is their *spirituall joy and comfort*. For this is made opposite to that imperious and austere exercise of Church-power, which some being guilty of, do exceedingly grieve and discourage the hearts of such who fear God, as the Prophet *Ezekiel* complaineth of such fiery Pastors. Hence he speaks of heaviness and sorrow so much in the next Chapter, from whence observe,

*That*



*That the ministeriall work in a great measure of it consisteth in administering comfort and consolation to such as stand in need thereof.*

The administration of comfort is a great part of the ministerial function.

Our work is not only to endeavour the conversion of such who are turned aside from God, but also the *comfort and consolation* of such who are sadly dejected. We see our Saviour himself, after whose example all Ministers are to walk, was very careful heerin, *Joh. 17. 13. These things have I spoken that my joy might be fulfilled in you, not only joy, but perfected and compleated joy.* Therefore when his Disciples were cast down with sorrow about his departure from them, how ready and willing is he to suggest all such arguments as might administer joy, yea, and promiseth his spirit as a Comforter, which would effectually set home those arguments upon their hearts? This Apostle also, how frequent is he in pressing this duty, ingeminating of it? *Rejoyce in the Lord alway, again I say rejoyce. Phil. 4. 4.* Hence he saith to these *Philippians, cap. 1. 25. that he had confidence of abiding with them for the furtherance and joy of their faith*: where you see the more growth and encrease in grace, the more joy; and it is called *the joy of faith*, because by beleiving we come to partake of this joy. Let not then any people nourish prejudices in their hearts against the faithfull Ministers of the Gospel, as if they endeavoured only to discourage men, to fill the hearts of people with despair, to drive them into melancholy, and turn them out of their wits, as prophane persons caluminate: for our great work is to provide comfort for such as are fit Subjects to receive it. That must alwaies be remembred, oyl is for the wounded in soul: this wine is not for such who are transported with feaverish lusts of their sinnes, but if thy sinnes be a burthen to thee, and thou hast cast them off, then *manna* is prepared for thee in this wilderness; then a year of *Jubilee* is to be proclaimed to thee who didst mourn under thy spirituall debts. But let us explicate this Truth.

And first, There is a twofold joy, *a carnall and worldly joy*, whereby men delight in the pleasures of sin, and the jolly pastimes and customes that are in the world; and there is a *spiritual joy* arising from Gods love in Christ, whereby we are quickened to all holinesse with great delight; now God forbid that any Ministers should be helpers of the former joy. There have indeed been such unfavoury salt, prophane Ministers of the Gospel, whose work hath been to strengthen the hands of wicked men, to preach peace and mercy to them while wallowing in their sinnes; but wo to such Pastors, and such a people. These are sharply reprov'd in the Scripture, for there alwaies will be such men-pleasers, such *daubers with untempered mortar*, as *Jer. 6. 14. They heal the hurt of my daughter slightly, saying, Peace, Peace, when there is no peace.* Would you have such a Physician that should flatter you about the wounds of your body, saying, it will heal, it will heal, when thou feelest it to putrifie more and more? Such spirituall Mountebanks the Prophet *Ezechiel* complaineth of also, *cap. 13. 10. They have seduced my people, saying, peace, peace, especially at 22. verse.* these wicked Prophets are said to *make sad the hearts of such whom God would not have made sad, and strengthened the hands of the wicked by promising them life.* Thus you see what an unfaithful Minister will do, all that he can and dare, he will uphold and encourage a prophane person; and all that he can and dare, he will uphold and discourage, vex and grieve such who fear God, and whom God would have comforted: but such men in time meet with an overflowing storm and great hailstones falling upon them, as *v. 11.* which shall destroy them, and rend the wall down they have daubed up. Do not then think this is the joy we should help you in: in your prophane pleasures, in your superstitious and vain customes to encourage you; no, this were to deprive both our selves and you of true solid joy.

1. There is a twofold joy, carnall and spirituall.



2. Ministers  
are to help  
their joy  
whose graces  
they have  
before helped.

Hence in the second place, *We are to help the joy of those whose grace we have helped before.* Joy cannot be the first stone in Gods building, grace and holiness is first, and then consolation; The spirit of God is first a *sanctifier*, and then a *comforter*. So that many people take a preposterous method; if they be sick, they look the Minister should presently give them comfort; there must not a word be said of their sinnes, of the necessity of repentance, this will make them despair. Fond and foolish people, why would ye be tickled into hell? why would ye be pleased into damnation? oh it cannot be that thou shouldst have comfort before godlinesse, this would be to falsifie the covenant of God, to abuse the seal of pardon, applying it to him; whom God doth still hold guilty, Understand then Gods method, and submit thereunto, saying, I do not expect comfort; I would not have the promises of grace applied to me while thus obstinate and impenitent in my sinful waies, but if thou art found godly, then we are to comfort and to comfort, as *Isa. 40. 1.* again and again, not giving over till that evil spirit of unbelief be cast out: And this spirituall comfort is seen in two particulars.

1. *Comfort under the guilt of sinne*, and truly herein we do a most acceptable work. Then it is indeed *the tongue of the learned*, when we speak a word in season to such afflicted spirits; how ready and willing are the faithfull Ministers of the Gospel to bring the balm of *Gilead* to such persons? how pittifull and compassionate because they know the terrour of the Lord? God hath commanded us to be *Messengers of peace*, and like *Noahs* dove to come with an Olive-branch, assuring them that the waters are abated; and oh that God would provide such comforting work for us; It is very seldome to meet with such: we have work enough to reprove the prophane, to instruct the erroneous; but how few do need comfort because their sinnes are a heavy burthen upon them.

In the 2. place, we are to help *the comfort of the godly in respect of their outward afflictions*. For they are more chastened than other men; there is no godly man but God hath appointed a crosse for him; yea, sometimes many crosses together. Now how necessary is it to have a faithful and wise comforter in such cases? for alas, our own hearts are full of discouragements, and every thing is ready to appear more terrible than it is, and the devil he is very ready to make the waters overflow more than they would do. So that to administer comfort to such disconsolate persons, is the best act of love, and the most suitable alms that can be desired. Seeing then that grace must be laid, as a foundation for comfort;

3. Sharp means  
are to be used  
before com-  
fort.

Hence in the third place, *Before the Ministers of the Gospel can administer comfort to unregenerate persons, they must necessarily use sharp and bitter means, as preparatory thereunto.* Neither are we then to be blamed, or judged too cruell and austere, but sinne is to be condemned as the cause of it. It is your sinne that maketh all bitter things necessary. When the Physician administreth bitter Physick, which maketh thee exceeding sick, is he to be blamed? and not rather those peccant humours within us. The ground must be plowed up, and have its bowels as it were moved, ere the good seed can be sown into it: The wool must be carded, and torn as it were in peeces, ere it be made for a garment. The stone must come under the hammer and saw, ere it be prepared for the building. And thus ere the heart of man be fit to receive Gospel-comfort, it must be humbled and broken by the Law of God: So that we are making way for your comfort even while we denounce the curses of the Law: To preach of hell and damnation, though it be grievous to you, yet it is wholesome; Therefore do not thou cry out against such men that have the Law, hell and damnation so much in their mouths, for this is the way to polish and prepare thee for comfort; we do not forget the Gospel while we preach so:  
Neither



neither are we to be accounted as legall Preachers, and not such as preach Christ, for hereby we leuell the mountain for Christ to come, hereby we streighten the camels back, that it may go through the eye of the needle; yea, all those spirituall censures inflicted upon offenders, are for comfort; if thou art reprov'd, and that sharply and zealously, it is for thy comfort: yea, if thou art for thy scandalous and impenitent waies cast out from Church-communion, and denied the seals of comfort: yet all this is medicinall, and maketh a way for comfort. The illustrious person is by *Paul* cast into *spirituall sorrow*, that so he may partake of spirituall joy and consolation; of which blessed effect more in its time, when we come (God willing) to the next Chapter.

In the next place, let us consider the grounds, *why Ministers are to promote the comfort of such who are fit subjects for it.*

And first, *Because they are Ministers of the Gospel:* and what is that but the glad tidings of pardon of sin, of reconciliation, and of everlasting happiness? *εὐαγγέλιον* is noted to signifie not only glad tidings but the reward also given unto the messengers thereof. What then is more suitable to the Ministers of comfort but to bring comfort, that we may say, as *David* of *Abimaaz*, *he is a good man, and bringeth good tidings?* If a Minister be a *Boanerges*, a son of thunder, it is that he may be a son of consolation. It is not contrary to their commission to preach of sinne, and of the day of judgement, for so *Paul* did to *Felix*, which made him tremble; only we are not to stay here; we must not keep you allwaies under this Schoolmaster, but bring you at last to Christ. Insomuch that all our duties tend to this, even to advance the Gospel in the hearts of hearers; yea, every doctrine of Christ, as it is a doctrine after godlinesse, so it is also after consolation. And therefore if any opinion do properly make against godlinesse, we may reject it: and so if any do truly make against solid comfort, we may refuse that as not being of Christ. It is true, many hereticall and erroneous persons may pretend to great comforts and ravishments; They usually say, they never had so much comfort as since they engaged in such waies; but then you must remember that the devil may be transformed into an angel of light: and as there is a counterfeit piety, so there is also a counterfeit comfort. It is not enough then to have comfort, but it is to be judged and tried by Gods word. Neither may we say, this is a comfortable doctrine, therefore I will embrace it, but first see it be a true Scripture-doctrine, and then receive it, for such to be sure will also be comfortable.

2. *We are to help forward the godly mans comfort, because the heart of man awakened for sinne is very much indisposed to receive it, and the devil he is a vehement opposer of it.* That the heart of man wounded for sin doth difficultly receive consolation, is plain, because joy is the fruit of Gods spirit, and the spirit of God is given not only to sanctifie us, but to vouchsafe consolation also, so that as a man hath a dead womb, in respect of grace, he is not able to have one good thought without Gods spirit, so he hath also a dead womb in respect of comfort, he is not able to have one comfortable thought, unlesse God who is called the God of all consolation, infuse it into him: and then the devil is a daily opposer of our comforts as well as our graces; as he is a tempter to sinne, so to unbelief and discouragements: he loveth to keep us as he did the *lunatick* person about the tombs, in thoughts of our hypocrisie and damnation, that God doth not love us, that he hath cast us off. Is it not then necessary to endeavour the comfort of a godly man, when it is so greatly gainsaid both within and without?

3. *Our duty is to perswade to comfort, because hereby the heart is more enlarged and quickned unto all godlinesse: The joy of the Lord is our strength, as Nehemiah said, Nehem. 8. 10.* It is like oyl to the wheels. With what delight and gladnesse doth a joyfull beleever exercise himself in all holinesse? with what

Why Ministers are to comfort the people.

1. Because they are Ministers of the Gospel.

2. Because an awakened heart is much indisposed to it.

3. Because hereby the heart is more quickned to godlinesse.



courage and confidence doth he discharge all the duties required of him? The spirit of God did come upon the Prophet when he played upon the harp; The more chearfull, the more prepared to receive power from God; as the drier the paper is, the fitter to receive characters; whereas upon wet paper none can write. As it doth thus enable us to do, no lesse also doth it fortifie us to suffer: We see with what readinesse and undaunted courage the Martyrs endured the most exquisite torments; and why so? but because they were filled with unspeakable joy: insomuch that their condition was far better than the most prosperous and flourishing estate of any wicked men. They were *infelicitè felices*, and these were *felicitè infelices*, as *Austin* said: So that in promoting holy joy we advance grace and godlinesse also.

Use first of instruction to the Ministers of the Gospel, to answer the main end of their office, which is to be comforters; not to be Marahs but Naomies: Spiritual consolation is the proper fruit of the spirit of Adoption, and therefore a pearl highly to be esteemed: and that they may do this, they must attend to their doctrine and their practise: Their doctrine, and thus in Popery in stead of building up they destroy comfort; the doctrine of uncertainty and doubting about the state of grace; the doctrine of satisfaction and merits, these are uncomfortable doctrines. Indeed some adversaries say, the doctrine of absolute predestination, and that Christ died but for some only, and not all, is an uncomfortable doctrine. Hence their saying is *spiritus Calvinianus est spiritus Melancholicus*. The Antinomians they also say, to preach the Law and repentance, thereby as in a way to obtain remission of sins, is a method of preaching, that destroyeth all comfort, but these might easily be confuted if it were our businesse. It is a Ministers duty to see the doctrine he preacheth, doth not in its own genius, and as a proper effect work despair or discouragement; And then for their practise, they must be carefull that all reproofs, admonitions, and spiritual censures be so managed, that though for the while they may seem bitter, yet at the last they will bring much comfort; and that though they be in pain for a while, yet they shall at last rejoyce to see a man child born.

2. Use of Exhortation, to be such a prepared people, as that comfort may be applyed to you; how can ye have comfort if ye live in the waies of sinne? doe not any thing that may chase away this comfort; if we preach never such comfortable truths, if thou by thy negligence and unmortified walking dost deprive thy self of consolation, then know the blame lieth in thy self, and not in the Ministry: Thou criest give me a word of comfort, how can we comfort him, whom God would not have comforted?



## SERM. CXLVII.

*God only the Lord of our Christian Faith.*

2 COR. I. 24.

*For by faith ye stand.*

**T**His last clause (saith Calvin) other Interpreters either take no notice of, or else do not clearly instruct about it; for whereas it is plain by the causall particle *ᾧ*, it is brought in as an argument of something preceding, it is very difficult to finde out the reason: Those Interpreters that take notice of it are divided, Some do make it a reason of the words immediatly foregoing: *Paul* was a helper of *their* joy, because they stood firmly in the faith; for although there were some who denied the resurrection, yet that was not the doctrine of the Church in general, nor was it publicly professed by them: It is true, many abuses there were in practice both civill and religious, yet because they did firmly retain the true faith, therefore it was that he would not wholly cast them off as no Church; Their true doctrine which they professed made him the more hopeful of them; and certainly the pure sound faith professed by a Church, though otherwise greatly corrupted, maketh it to have the essence and life of a Church, and will suggest hope, that God in time will make them an holy practical Church, as well as a sound Orthodox one; Hence *Paul* in his first Epistle to the *Thessalonians*, c. 3. v. 5, 6, 7. doth much rejoyce in their faith, that they stood stedfast therein; When I could no longer forbear I sent to know your faith. As also *Timothew* brought him glad tidings of their faith: And again, we were comforted in our affliction by your faith, and this interpretation is very probable, and not to be wholly rejected. But then a second is more probable, and that maketh it a reason of the former part of the verse. We have not dominion over your faith, for by faith ye stand stedfast: Insomuch that if I *Paul*, or an *Angel* from heaven should preach unto you another doctrine, yet you beleeve in the truth, as Gods truth, and not mans truth; So that God alone hath the dominion over your hearts in beleeving. Thus it is a very fit and proper reason. Hence *Heinsius* thinketh there is a transposition of the words, which is usuall with *Paul*, and that they should be inserted before the later clause, thus; Not that we have dominion over your faith, for by faith you stand; Whether we reade it objectively, you stand in the faith; or instrumentally, by faith you stand; it is not much materiall: Neither are we to render it in the past signification, you have stood; because it is *ἵστητε* in the Greek, as if the Apostle did imply they formerly had indeed stood in the faith, though lately they grew wavering: for it is usuall to use the preterperfect for the present, especially when a continuance or perseverance is intended; as *Matth. 20*, Why stand ye here (*ἵστητε*) idle all the day long? Both these interpretations may be conjoynd, but because the latter is the most considerable: Therefore I shall insist on that, and observe,

That



The Christi-  
ans faith rela-  
teth only unto  
God.

*That the Christian faith is of that nature, that it doth respect and relate unto God only.*

We believe not in men, but in God: Whether we speak of dogmatical or fiducial faith, they cannot have any other bottom to stand upon, but the authority of God himself, *Thus saith the Lord, Thus it is written*, is the ground of all true Christian faith; which doth deserve an explication in some particular Propositions. As

1. There is an  
humane and a  
divine faith.

First, *There is an humane, and there is a divine faith, which only deserveth the name of Christian faith, and to which only the promises of God doe belong.* An humane faith, I call that, when men doe beleieve principles of Religion meerly upon humane motives; that is the ultimate reason and motive, into which their faith is resolved. These humane motives are manifold, as the Authority of the Church, the Authority of Ministers and Pastors, our education by parents, custome and universality, as also the Laws and Edicts of a Magistrate, commanding such a Religion to be received, and no other. Now whosoever maketh this the chief reason of the profession of his faith, is upon no better ground than the *Turkes*, is for their *Mahumetan*, the *Papists* for their *Papish faith*. Insomuch that many *Protestants*, *Turkes* and *Papists*, though they exceedingly differ in the materials of Religion, yet agree in the *formali motivo*; they believe so and so, because brought up in it, because commanded by their Civil Magistrates. It is that which the *Papists* upbraid us with, that our Religion is but a *Parliament-Religion*, or a *Queen Elizabeths-Religion*, because when they established it, the Land generally received it. Now to this we say, That no doubt the generality of people, except such as are enlightned by Gods Spirit, doe receive even the Christian or true Religion, but upon civil and humane respects; and therefore when *Emperours* have been *Arrians*, the people have been *Arrians*; when the *Kings of Israel* were *Idolaters*, the inhabitants became *Idolaters*. And thus when the Kings of the Earth have been *Papists*, the people have been *Papists* also. So that they cannot object any thing more against the *Protestant Religion*, than we may against the *Papist*. Onely we adde a further position, which introduceth a divine faith, which they overthrow, and so by consequence teach no more than an humane faith. For we hold, That every private believer is bound to have an explicate faith, of the things necessary to salvation; and this faith we say is knowledge, the ground whereof is, the Authority and Testimony of God in the Scripture. So that we doe not believe in Magistrates, nor in Ministers, nor in the Church, trusting our faith and salvation upon them, but the word of God onely; whereas the *Papists* do expressly affirm, That a private Christians faith is enough to salvation, if he content himself with this, *That he believeth as the Church believeth*, never troubling himself in reading of books, or searching of the Scripture. As *Valentia's* known instance of a Merchant, brought in by him, disputing, What Religion he should be of? doth evidently declare. So then, a *Papist*, as a *Papist*, cannot reach any higher than to an humane faith. For though they will not yeeld the Authority of the Church to be an humane Authority, yet both reason and experience doth fully convince that. But let us come to our own people, and sadly bewail the ignorance and stupidity of *Protestants* in general, who are not moved by any divine motives or Scripture-respects to imbrace their Religion, but onely are perswaded herein by external motives, very few being able to give a reason of the faith or hope that is in them, which yet the Apostle *Peter* requireth of every man and woman, *1 Pet. 3. 15*. What reason have they, but their fathers example, and the Lawes of the Land? So that it is meerly accidental, that they do receive a true Religion; for



for it had been Heretical and Idololatrical, it had been all one to them, they would have entertained it however. But to this particular, you must observe one Caution: It's one thing to speak of the Introductory and Preparatory means of faith; and another thing of the ultimate and formal motive or reason, why I do believe. We do readily grant, That the true Churches Ministry may prepare for a divine faith: *What is Paul, and what is Apollo, but Ministers by whom ye believe?* saith the Scripture (1 Corinth. 3.) Thus Timothy had his faith by the godly education of his Mother and Grandmother. Yea (John 4.) we reade of the woman of Samaria, instrumental to bring many people to believe on Christ onely; yet observe that expression, vers. 42. *Now we believe not, because of thy saying, for we have heard him our selves.* Godly Ministers then, and godly parents may be greatly helpfull to us in true believing; but then the reason and chief motive is, from the Divine Authority of the Scripture, declaring this truth. We doe not believe in Ministers, nor in the Church. And thus you must understand that passage of Jehoshaphats, (Chron. 20. 20.) *Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established: believe the Prophets, so shall ye prosper. Believe in God ultimately, but believe the Prophets ministerially.* So that it would be a fanaticke presumption, out of a perswasion that onely worketh faith, thereby to cast off those usefull helps and means which he hath appointed for the producing of faith.

In the next general place, we are to know, *That two things are necessarily required to the working of a divine faith:* The one *Effectively*; The other *Objectively*: The principle that worketh faith in us, and the reason or motive thereof: The principle that worketh faith in us, is God alone. None can make the heart of man to believe Scripture-truths, but God onely. Hence *Faith is the gift of God*; so some are said, *To believe through grace*, Act. 18. 27. Is it not plain in the Pharisees, notwithstanding they heard our Saviour preach, and also saw his wonderfull miracles, yet to them it was not given to believe, or to know the mysteries of God; but to others more unlearned and contemptible it was. Hence it falleth out, that the most learned men are many times most Atheistical, or at least Sceptical and doubting in Religion. Infomuch that we are to be importunate with God in prayer, that he would both work and increase faith in us. Hence Christ is said to be, both the *author and finisher of our faith*, Hebr. 12. 2. It's the mighty power of God, so enlightning and enabling thee, that thou doest adhere to the truth. For how many specious arguments may be produced against the faith? How mutable are many in forsaking the faith they once professed, and turn Heretical? So that it is a special work of Gods grace to make thee stand firme in the faith, especially in times of temptation. To be a pillar in the Temple of the Lord, and not a reed shaken with every winde, is a glorious preservation. For it's plain, that it's fancy, error, or humour that lead many in Religion, and not this holy precious faith.

Again, The second thing necessarily concurring to a divine faith, is a *Divine testimony*; it must be *Gods word*. We must have the Doctrine from Christ, else our faith is but an humane faith, and so our Religion, but an humane Religion. The *Thessalonians* are commended by Paul, *That they received the Word, not as the word of men, but as it is indeed the word of God*; and when so received, it effectually worketh in those that believe. Alas, what is the reason, there is so little holinesse, so little godlinesse? It is because there is so little divine faith. The truths we preach are not received as the word of God; we look no further or higher than to a man in these things: we doe not hear and tremble, we doe not beleeve and tremble; we rise not up with heart-reverence, as *Eglon*, though an *Heathen* did to

Two things required to the working of a divine faith.

1. The principle that worketh it in us, God.

2. A divine testimony, Gods word.



to *Ehud*, when he said, *He had a message from the Lord.*

3. Hence it is that none can have a sovereignty over the faith of a believer.

In the third place, In that the true Christian faith floweth from such a divine principle, and ariseth from such a divine motive, *Hence it is that no kinde of persons have an absolute Sovereignty over the faith of a believer; and who-so-ever doe arrogate it to themselves, they assume the property of the Almighty, and most infinite God.* They arrogate to themselves the peculiar and incommunicable property of Christ, which is to be the Head of the Church, and a Law-giver in respect of any Doctrine, Worship or Ordinances. It is true, there have been such, especially the Pope of *Rome*, who hath thus arrogated to himself, setting himself in the Temple of God, as God; but the blasphemies of such have been written (as it were) in their fore-heads, and hereby they are justly deemed to be a *Political*, or *Church-Antichrist*, as there is a *Doctrinal Antichrist*. But we affirme, *That no kinde of persons can have dominion over a mans faith*, seeing it hath such a peculiar reference to God.

1. No Church-governours.

First, *Not spiritual and Church Rulers, or Ecclesiastical Governours.* If the Apostles would not assume it, who then may? It is true, there are several Texts in Scripture, which command us to hear our Pastours, to obey them, to submit unto them, to have them highly in esteeme for their workes sake. Such as doe not hear them, are to be accounted as *Heathens and Publicans*. They are endowed with power to admonish and rebuke sharply: Yea, where obstinacy is in sinners, *To cast them out of the Church*. But all this doth not arise to a *Magisterial Domination* over mens consciences. And although they have power to binde and loose, which God himself promisseth to confirme in Heaven; yet all this is declaratively and ministerially onely. How farre there is a decisive power in Councils to extinguish all errors and heresies, is not here to be debated. This is enough, that as no particular person, so no Councils, though never so œcomenical can say, we have dominion over your faith. And

2. No civil governours.

Secondly, *No civil power hath dominion over any mans faith.* No Magistrate can make Articles of Faith, can appoint another worship of God, or other Sacraments than Christ hath appointed. Faith is not *Cesar's* gift, neither can any man believe, *Præcisè quia vult*, as *Mirandula* declareth, *meerly because he will*. How farre Magistrates have power in matters of Religion is greatly disputed and determined by the excesse in some, and by the defect in others. But however no Kings or Emperours can say, *We have dominion over your faith*, no more than they can say, *We are the true and great Jehovah*. They cannot make a Religion, make Sacraments, but enjoin the observance of that which is required in the Word; and the reason which excludeth both spiritual and civil Governours, is general to all. We are not baptized into any mans name, neither hath any Emperour or Church-officer died for us; they have not been crucified for us; neither have they power over our hearts, to impose a command upon them, which must necessarily be in the duty of faith; neither can they damne or save men. Hence the Apostle saith, *There is one Law-giver, which is able to save and to destroy*, Jam. 4.12.

4. Faith admits of degrees.

Fourthly, Although divine faith be such a noble and excellent work, coming from Heaven, and ascending up to Heaven againe, *Yet it doth admit of degrees in the subject where it is.* Some have stronger faith, some weaker, some have more explicate and extensive faith, than others; yea and the most settled beleevers are subject to temptations; they are often assaulted, and that even in their faith about the principles and fundamentals, about God, about the Scriptures, about the immortality of the Soul, about the state of Glory, and eternal Torments. Fiery darts are sometimes injected, for



for which the people of God doe abhorre and loath themselves. Therefore we must distinguish between *little faith*, and *no faith*, between *doubtings* and *Atheisme*. And truly for this end doth God suffer errors and heresies to arise in his Church, that truth may be more confirmed, and the approved may be made manifest. It's to exercise the spiritual wisdom and faith of the godly, whether they can discern of things that differ, and can tell which is the strangers voice, and which is the true shepherds. It is a very grievous temptation to be assaulted about fiducial faith, whether the promises belong to thee in particular; but in some respects it is farre more terrible to be exercised in doubts about dogmatical faith: for this tendeth to the razing of the foundations, and the arguments or remedies to cure this distemper are more difficult.

*Use of Instruction.* Is faith thus immediately respecting God above all instruments, though making use of them? Then

First, Theirs is not faith, which doth wholly depend upon the Authority of a man, though never so eminent. We may not rely on *Austine*, on *Chrysostome*; neither doe we owne those expressions of *Lutherans* and *Calvinists*. For although we acknowledge them eminent instruments in propagating of the Gospel, yet we believe not upon their authority meerly, because *Luther* and *Calvin* faith so. It is true, nothing is more ordinary, than to admire mens persons, and while we extoll their gifts and abilities, we are secretly enticed to thinke of worthy men; above what we ought, and finde an awe in our consciences to recede from any opinion they have delivered: But we must take heed, we doe not hereby become guilty of spirituall Idolatry, setting up men as Idols in our hearts.

Secondly, This instructeth, that grosse ignorant men cannot have any divine faith; for they feel nothing of any work of Gods Spirit, or illumination upon their understandings; hence they believe as other men believe, as if a man were not to be saved by his own faith.

Thirdly, It sheweth the *Sceptical* and *Pyrrhonian* man in Religion, the meer Seeker, that he hath no faith. If he had the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen upon his soul, he would not be tossed up and down, as he is.

Fourthly, It sheweth, that the meer carnal *Politician* hath no divine faith, for he looketh upon Religion, but as an humane device, or a State-engine, and therefore can transforme into all shapes and times. How contrary is this to true faith?

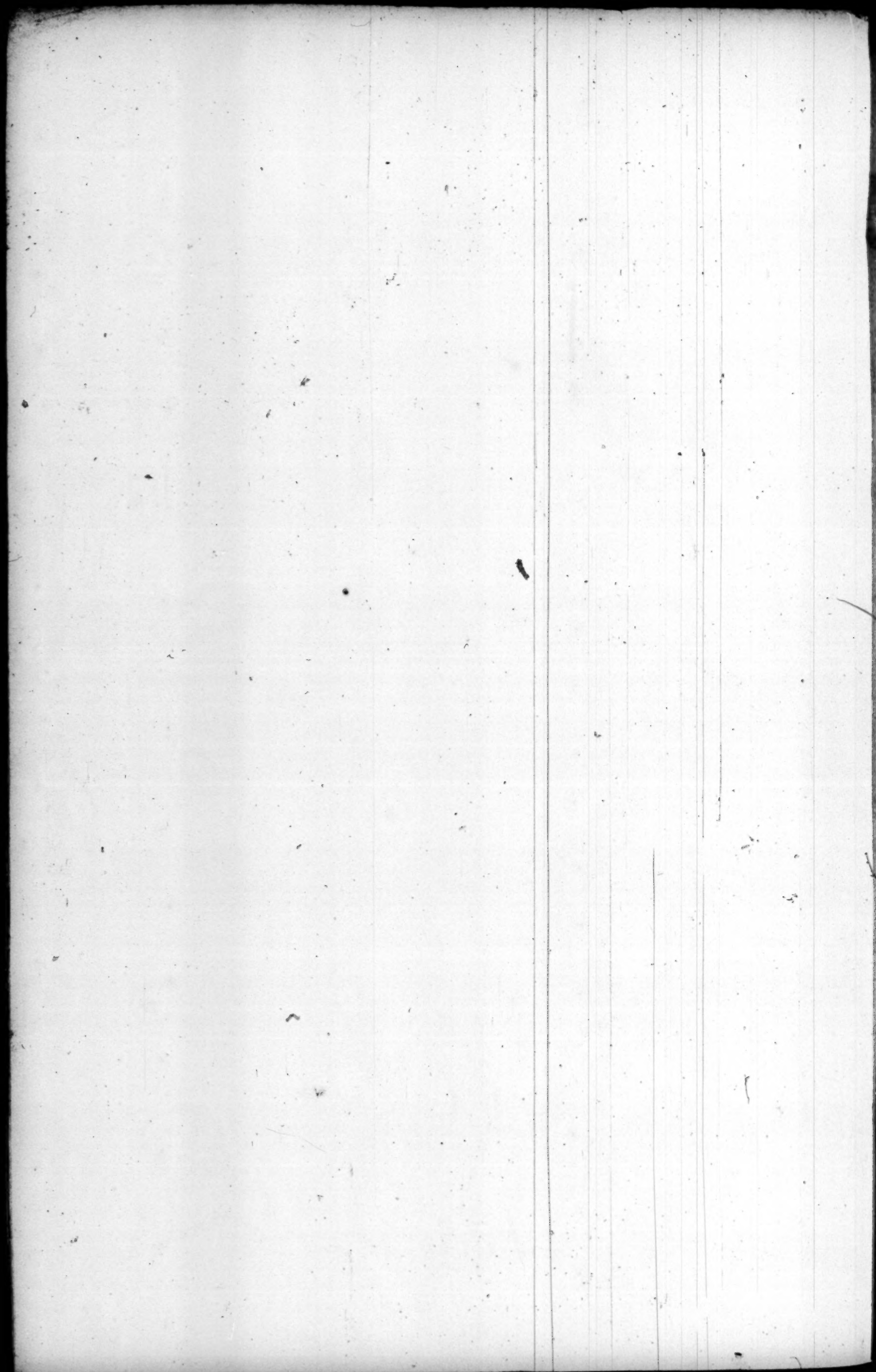
\* \* \*

---

FINIS.

---







A N

# Alphabetical Table

CONTAINING

## The chief Heads of this Treatise.

A

Administrations.



*He godly sometimes deceived about Gods Administrations towards them,*  
pag. 293, 294, 295,  
296, 297  
*Reasons of it,* 298  
*Rules for the preventing it,* 299, 300

Afflictions.

*God comforts his people in all their Afflictions, both spiritual,* 167  
*And temporal,* 168  
*'Tis a special duty to comfort the Afflicted. See Comfort.*  
*The most eminent Saints when Afflicted need comfort,* 188, 189, 190  
*See Sufferings.*  
*'Tis of great use to know what are the Afflictions of the people of God,* 256  
*Reasons of it.* *ibid.*  
*What use is to be made of preaching about those Afflictions which Paul and others suffered from the Heathens,*  
257, 258, 259  
*The Afflictions of the godly heavy and yet light,* 270  
*Faith and flesh passe different judgements upon Afflictions,* 270, 271  
*Propositions clearing it,* 271, 272  
*How we may know when flesh and when faith speaketh in Afflictions,* 274, 275  
276  
*'Tis very usefull to know that,* 277

A

*Natural strength not able to carry a man through all Afflictions,* 280  
*Propositions clearing it,* 280, 281, 282

*See Troubles and Sufferings.*

Anointing.

*All true believers have a spiritual Anointing from God,* 620  
*Propositions clearing it,* 620, 621

Apostle.

*What an Apostle was,* 15  
*Two kinds of them,* *ibid.*  
*They were appointed by Christ in the first building of the Church,* 16  
*The properties of an Apostle,* 16, 17, 18  
19  
*Of the difference betwixt the Office of an Apostle, and of an ordinary Pastor,*  
506, 507

Assurance.

*A believer may be Assured he performeth duties with an upright heart,* 394  
*What is required to an Assurance of our being in a state of grace,* 395, 396  
*The impediments of Assurance,* 400, 401  
*Gods command to look after it,* 401, 402  
*The effects of it,* 402  
*Cautions about it,* 403  
X x x x Blessing



## An Alphabetical Table.

### B

#### Blessing.

**A** Threefold Blessing mentioned in Scripture, 127  
 Christians ought to Bless God for all his mercies, *ibid.*  
 What is required to our Blessing God aright, 128, 129, 130, 131  
 We should Bless God more for spiritual mercies than for other, 134

See Praising God.

### C

#### Call.

**T**He divine Call of Ministers necessary to be known, 19  
 Two things premised concerning a Ministers Call, 20  
 What are the practical concernments which will follow those who have a true Call from God to the Ministers, 21  
     To the people, 22  
 The Call to Church-offices proceeds meerly from the will and pleasure of God, 33, 34  
     What is there meant by the Will of God, 34, 35, 36

#### Changing.

Of Changing in matters of Religion, 546

#### Christ.

Why our Saviour called Christ, 36  
     What it doth imply, 27  
     He is the Sonne of God, 135  
 Propositions explaining how Christ is the Sonne of God, 136, 137. 561, 562, 563, 564  
     This truth is the foundation of all Christian comfort, 138, 139  
 Christ the onely object of all preaching, 557  
 When Christ is preached, 557, 558, 559, 560

Jesus is the Christ, the anointed of God, 569

#### See Jesus.

#### Church.

Of the name Church, 50, 51  
 The nature and description of a Church, 51  
     It is a society 52  
     Called of God, 52, 53, 54  
 By the preaching of the Word, to the profession of Christ and Church-communion, 55, 56  
 Wherein Church communion consisteth, 56, 57  
 The notes and signs of a Church, 58, 59  
     Why necessary to be known, *ibid.*  
     All are not of equal necessity, *ibid.*  
     A latitude to be granted in the application of them, 60  
 Of the twofold form of the Church, internal and external, *ib.*  
 The marks of the visible, not to be confounded with the properties of the invisible Church, 61  
 Why Paul writeth to the Church, and not to the Churches of Corinth, 63  
 A Church is Gods people in a more peculiar manner, 64  
 Seven things implied in the Churches being said to be of God, 64, 65, 66, 67  
 A Church sometimes gathered amongst the most prophane people, 69  
 A Church may be a true one, though defiled with many corruptions, 70  
     Three propositions clearing it, 73  
     Three reasons demonstrating it, 76  
 What corruptions were in the Church of Corinth, 71, 72  
 The soundnesse and purity of a Church admits of degrees, 73  
 The Church of God, as 'tis a Church doth farre surpasse all civil societies and temporal dignities, 77  
     Three propositions clearing it, 78, 79  
     The grounds of it, 79, 80  
 'Tis hard for Churches to keep within their proper bounds about Church administration,



## An Alphabetical Table.

<i>ministrations,</i>	80	<i>Six propositions clearing the truth,</i>	162, 163, 164, 165
<i>'Tis a Ministers duty by all lawfull means to promote the Church he is related to,</i>	81	<i>God Comforts his people in all afflictions,</i>	166, 167
<i>All that are in the Church are Saints by profession,</i>	83	<i>No Philosophers ever had the true art or grounds of Comfort,</i>	169
<i>What is comprehended under Church-Sainthood,</i>	84, 85	<i>God Comforts onely by the Scriptures,</i>	170
<i>All Saints ought to joyn themselves to Church communion,</i>	91	<i>What are the grounds of Comfort in Scripture.</i>	171, 172, 173
<i>Yet some causes may excuse them,</i>	91, 92	<i>How God is said to Comfort his people in all their afflictions, notwithstanding they are oft disconsolate,</i>	174, 175, 176, 177
<i>What are those sinfull grounds why many do not joyn themselves to Church communion,</i>	93, 94	<i>Comfort not absolutely necessary to salvation.</i>	175
<i>The best Churches changeable in their affections to their guides,</i>	464	<i>These only are fit to Comfort others who have the experimental work of Gods grace upon their own hearts,</i>	181
<i>Propositions clearing it,</i>	464, 465	<i>Four propositions clearing it,</i>	182, 183, 184
<i>The causes of it,</i>	466, 467	<i>Four reasons confirming it,</i>	184, 185, 186
<i>The Church esteems many things which the world despises,</i>	31, 32	<i>It is a special duty to Comfort the afflicted.</i>	187
<i>Church-officers.</i>		<i>Propositions clearing it,</i>	187, 188, 189, 190
<i>Church-officers appointed by Christ as the head.</i>	28	<i>Two things required to the Comforting others in a right manner,</i>	190, 191
<i>Propositions clearing it.</i>	29, 30	<i>The same grounds of Comforts which revive one, may revive another also,</i>	191
<i>Two things Church-officers are to take heed of, pride and idleness,</i>	30, 31	<i>What are the general grounds of Comfort in afflictions,</i>	192, 193
<i>How it concerns Church-officers to agree in matters of Religion,</i>	46	<i>Reasons of it,</i>	193, 194, 195
<i>Three propositions clearing it,</i>	46, 47	<i>Our Comforts are and abound by Christ,</i>	209, 210
<i>Three things conducing to that happy agreement,</i>	47, 48	<i>How Christ makes our Comforts to abound in our sufferings for his sake,</i>	210, 211, 212
<i>Comfort.</i>		<i>God commonly proportions our comforts to our sufferings,</i>	214
<i>God a God of all Comfort to his,</i>	148	<i>And sometimes makes them to exceed</i>	215
<i>What is implied in that expression,</i>	149	<i>The reasons of it,</i>	216, 217
<i>What in the word Comfort,</i>	150, 151	<i>Why God often denies Comfort in trouble</i>	217, 218
<i>Propositions about the Comforts of God,</i>	152	<i>Our Comfort is promoted by others suffering for Christ,</i>	223, 224, 225, 226, 227
<i>It is so to be managed as to be made an antidote against despair, and yet a curb to presumption,</i>	ib.	<i>'Tis universal holiness that is the ground of Comfort,</i>	443
<i>Comfort not to be judged of without Scripture-light.</i>	153		
<i>God actually Comforts his people,</i>	157		
<i>How God comforts his people,</i>	158, 159, 160		
<i>God a God of Comfort only to believers,</i>	161		



## An Alphabetical Table.

Communion.

*Two sorts of Communion,* 251  
*Communion with the sufferers for Christ*  
*a good way to interest us in their glory,*  
*ibid.*

Confidence and Self-confidence.

*Self-confidence a great sin,* 302  
*Propositions clearing the nature of Self-*  
*confidence,* 302, 303, 304  
*A godly man sometimes guilty of it*  
*309, 310*  
*Of the sinfulness of it,* 313, 314,  
*315*

Confirme, *vide* Establish.

Conscience.

*Of the Conscience,* 384  
*The witness of a good Conscience a great*  
*ground of comfort,* 385  
*What is required to a good Conscience,*  
*385, 386, 387, 388, 389*  
*How the Spirit witnesses with our Con-*  
*sciences,* 389  
*What are those effects of the Spirit by*  
*which our Consciences are rightly*  
*guided in witnessing to us,* 390, 391  
*Distinctions concerning Conscience and*  
*its testimonies,* 392, 393

Consolation, *vide* Comfort.

Conversation.

*Of a twofold Conversation,* 443  
*What is required to a good Conversation,*  
*445, 446*

Conversion.

*A great deal of difference in the persons of*  
*the Converted,* 42  
*And in the manner of their Conversion,*  
*43*  
*The reasons of both,* 44

Corinth.

*Of the City Corinth,* 68

D

Day.

**C**hrist hath a solemn Day wherein  
*great changes will be made,* 479  
*Wherein these great changes will be,*  
*479, 480, 481, 482, &c.*

Dead.

*Of Gods raising the Dead,* 326  
*What it implies,* 328, 329

Death.

*The natural fear of Death not removed*  
*by grace,* 284  
*Propositions clearing it,* 285, 286  
*Of what use the natural fear of Death is,*  
*286*  
*There is a natural fear of Death in all,*  
*though in some more, in some lesse,*  
*288*  
*When the fear of Death is sinfull,* 289,  
*290, 291*

Deliverance.

*Deliverance both temporal and spiritual*  
*from God,* 341, 342

Despair.

*Whence Despair arises,* 352

Dispensation.

*All Gods Dispensations further the sal-*  
*vation of his people,* 242, &c.  
*Two sorts of Dispensations which con-*  
*duce to that end.* 244  
*Vide Administrations.*

E

Earnest.

**G**race the Earnest of glory, 651  
*How grace and an Earnest differ,*  
*652, 653*  
*What is implied in the Earnest of Gods*  
*Spirit,* 654, 655, 656  
*They*



## An Alphabetical Table.

<i>They who have the Earnest of the Spirit cannot fall away,</i>	657, 658	<i>The division of Faith as to the object,</i>	638
Education.		<i>Whether in Faith, and by Faith be oaths</i>	665
Education not to be rested upon,	44, 45	<i>Ministers have no power over a Christians Faith,</i>	684
Ends.		<i>A Christians Faith relates onely to God,</i>	694
<i>What are these inferiour Ends interposing betwixt God and us, which we are apt to look upon,</i>	416, 417	<i>Propositions clearing it,</i>	696, 697
Enjoyments.		Father.	
<i>Temporal Enjoyments as well as Spiritual mercies are the gift of God,</i>	369	<i>What is implied in Gods being our Father,</i>	120
<i>Propositions clearing it,</i>	370, 371, 372	<i>What in the expression Our Father,</i>	121
<i>Reasons for it,</i>	373	<i>God is the Father of mercies,</i>	140
Establish.		<i>What is implied in Gods being the Father of mercies,</i>	141, 142, 143, 144
<i>Wherein the Establishing worke of Gods grace lieth,</i>	607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612	<i>Fear of Death, vid. Death.</i>	
<i>Arguments proving all Establishing to be from God,</i>	613	Flesh.	
<i>The most eminent need Establishment as well as the weakest,</i>	614	<i>Faith and Flesh passe different judgments upon afflictions,</i>	274, &c.
<i>Demonstrations of it,</i>	615, 616, 617	<i>Of the phrase, walking according to the Flesh,</i>	520
<i>'Tis in Christ alone that we are Established,</i>	617, 618	<i>Walking by principles of Flesh makes men unconstant,</i>	521
<i>Reasons why we cannot Establish our selves,</i>	636, 637	<i>What are the principles of Flesh,</i>	521, 522, 523
Experience.		Forme;	
<i>Experience in former, should encourage to trust in God for future mercies,</i>	345	<i>How the Forme of a thing may be a note or mark of it,</i>	61
<i>Propositions clearing it,</i>	346, 347	G	
F		Glory of God.	
Faith.		<i>Is the duty of all Christians, especially Ministers, to lay out themselves for the Glory of God,</i>	500, 501
<i>OF the different judgements which Faith and flesh put upon afflictions,</i>	274, &c.	<i>Propositions clearing it,</i>	501, 502, 503
		<i>What is required to enable us to doe all things for Gods glory,</i>	504
		Glorying, vid. Rejoycing.	
		God.	
		<i>Of the Names of God,</i>	117
		God	



## An Alphabetical Table.

God alone can give grace and peace to his people. 118, 119

God a Father, especially to true believers, 120

What it implies, ib.

He is a Father to the weakest as well as strongest believer, 121

He is a true God, 536

He is the Father of mercies.

*Vide* Father.

### Godly.

Truly Godly, though eminent, yet humble, 37

Godliness and a Godly life is very convincing, and of great advantage, 455,

456

Why oft not convincing, 456, 457

### Grace.

Four acceptions of the word Grace, 66

Grace to be desired before all other things 100

Seven propositions discovering the nature of the Grace of God, 100, 101, 102

What are the opposites of Grace, 102

Who are fit subjects of the Grace of God, 103, 104, 105

Many erre about the Grace of God, and yet are extremely opposite one to another 105

Four Scripture-characters of the Grace of God, 106, 107

What is requisite to a certain knowledge of our being in a state of Grace, 395, 396

What to an experimental discerning of our Graces, 397, 398

The godly ascribe all to Grace, 433

Propositions clearing it, 433, 434

What is that Grace which the Apostle exalts above fleshly wisdom, 434, 435

436

What are the Graces which the Apostle acknowledgeth in his Ministry, 434,

435, 436, 437, &c.

Grace the earnest of glory.

*Vid.* Earnest.

### Growing.

In what things believers are to be alwayes Growing, 497, 498

## H

### Hope.

OF Paul's Hope concerning the Corinthians. 245

Hope Divine and Moral. 246

'Tis great encouragement in a Minister to see good grounds of Hope in his people. *ibid.*

What things are they which made Paul have such an Hope of the Corinthians, and other Ministers of their people, 247, 248, 249

### Humility.

Humility in the godly, though eminent 37

Wherein it discovers it self, 38,

39

What are the grounds of it, 39, 40

## I

### Jesus.

OF the name Jesus, 24

How Christ is a Jesus a Saviour, 25, 565

What kind of Saviour he is. 26

He is a Lord. 122

Four propositions clearing it. 123, 124, 125

What is implied in his being a Saviour. 565, 566, 567

To whom he is a Saviour, 567, 568

### Inconstancy.

Inconstancy a great sinne in all, especially in Ministers, 510, 546, 547, 548, &c.

Of its sinfulness in civil respects. 511, 512

Its aggravations, 513, 514

Its sinfulness in spiritual respects, 515, 516

Motives



## An Alphabetical Table.

<i>Motives against it,</i>	517, 518	<i>yet rely wholly upon Christ,</i>	356, 357
<i>The causes of it,</i>	553		358
<b>Joy.</b>		<b>Meditation.</b>	
<i>A two-fold Joy direct or reflex.</i>	175.	<i>Meditation upon Gods mercies very use- ful,</i>	133
<i>'Tis either spiritual or corporeal.</i>	176	<b>Mercies.</b>	
<b>Judgement-day, vid. Day.</b>		<i>Of the variety of Gods Mercies,</i>	144,
<b>K</b>			145, 146
<b>Knowledge.</b>		<i>The properties of Gods Mercies,</i>	146
<b>Certain Knowledge, vid. Assurance.</b>		<i>Who are the fit object of Gods Mercies,</i>	147
<b>L</b>		<i>'Tis dangerous to conceive of Gods Mer- cies without Scripture-light,</i>	155
<b>Learning.</b>		<i>Mercies acknowledged by believers, not only in general, but with all their ag- gravations,</i>	330, 331
<b>L</b>		<i>Wherein they use to aggravate their Mercies,</i>	331, 332, 333, 334
<i>Learning an excellent qualification,</i>	7	<i>Mercies not only positive, but privative, and preventing, to be accounted of.</i>	335
<i>Sometimes through the corruption of man'tis made use of for the promo- ting the Devils kingdom.</i>	ibid.	<i>Propositions clearing it,</i>	335, 336,
<i>'Tis not from the nature of Learning.</i>	8		&c.
<i>Learning not sufficient without the Spirit for the understanding of the Scriptures</i>	ib.	<i>Rules to affect our hearts concerning pre- venting Mercies,</i>	337, 338, 339
<b>Lord.</b>		<i>Mercies are not only bestowed, but conti- nued by God.</i>	340
<i>Christ our Lord, vid. Christ.</i>		<i>Reasons of it.</i>	342, 343
<b>Lying.</b>		<i>All Mercies come from God.</i>	369
<i>Lying not consistent with godlinesse,</i>	530	<i>God is the Father of Mercies, vid. Father.</i>	
<i>Propositions concerning the nature and kinds of Lying.</i>	531, 532, 533	<b>Minister.</b>	
<i>Means against it,</i>	534	<i>It is a Ministers duty by all lawfull means to promote the Church he is re- lated to.</i>	81
<i>The causes of it.</i>	534, 535	<i>Ministers meet with much opposition from worldly professors,</i>	260, 261
<b>M</b>		<i>Mercies vouchsafed to Ministers, are to be accounted as Church-mercies.</i>	378
<b>Means.</b>		<i>Ministers ought not to use fleshly wisdom.</i>	423
<b>M</b>		<i>Godlinesse in a Minister especially ad- vantagous.</i>	454, 455, 456
<i>Means to be made use of notwith- standing our trusting in God,</i>	355	<i>'Tis an happy thing for Minister and people to rejoyce in one another,</i>	468
<i>Two propositions clearing it,</i>	355,	<i>Propositions clearing it,</i>	469, 470
	356	<i>How a people ought to rejoyce in their Minister,</i>	470, 471
<i>How we should make use of Means, and</i>		<i>Wherein a Minister hath cause to re- joyce</i>	



## An Alphabetical Table.

joyce over his people. 473, 474, 475, &c.	The failings of Ministers are oft cast upon the Ministry, 541
Where a Minister hath hopes of doing good, he is encouraged to abide. 490	Propositions illustrating it, 541, 542, 543
Propositions clearing it, 490, 491, 492	Where the work of the Ministry is great the help of others is required. 571
A Ministers hope of doing good should be matter of joy to him. 493	Ministerial power is to be managed with much prudence. 678
Ministers especially ought to lay out themselves for the glory of God, 501, 502, 503	The Ministerial worke consisteth in a great measure in comforting the afflicted. 689
A Ministers changeablenesse makes his Ministry uselesse. 546	<b>N</b>
Propositions clearing it, 546, 547, 548, &c.	Names.
Where there is any fault in one Minister, the people are apt to lay it upon all. 572	The prefixing of a Name is not a sufficient argument to prove the Authority of any Scripture. 11
'Tis an happy thing when all Ministers agree to advance Christ, 273	Note.
The effects of that agreement, 573, 574	What things are necessary to make a Note 59
The true Ministers of Gods truth always the same. 575	<b>O</b>
Ministers have no dominion over their peoples faith. 684	Oath.
What is not implied in that truth. 684, 685	What an Oath is, 659, 660, 661
What is, 686, 687	Whether words be necessary to an Oath, 663
Ministers ought to comfort their people. 689	Whether in faith, and by faith be Oaths, 665
Propositions clearing it, 689, 690	Officers of the Church, vid. Church-officers.
Reasons of it. 691	Ordinances.
'Tis of great consequence that the young Ministers should have the guidance of the more experienced. 49	Publick Ordinances usefull and acceptable, 374, 375
<b>Ministry.</b>	Reasons for it. 375, 376, 377
What are the graces the Apostle acknowledged in his Ministry, 435, 436, 437, 438, &c.	<b>Oyle.</b>
Gods presence with the Ministry, renders the people inexcusable, 448, 449	The properties of material Oyle compared with spiritual. 621, 622, 623
Propositions clearing it, 450, 451	<b>P</b>
Wherein the successe of a faithfull Ministry is seen, 451, 452	Patience.
A constant Ministry necessary for every Church. 495	'Tis Patience in sufferings that makes them conduce to our salvation, 232
For what ends. 495, 496, 497	Patience
Where the Ministry hath wrought spiritually 'tis esteemed highly. 509	
The	



## An Alphabetical Table.

Patience commended by all.	233	Praising.	
What goeth to the producing of it,	234, 235		
Motives to Patience.	236, 237, 238, 239	It is our duty to Praise God for all his mercies,	364
Paul.		What is required to our Praising God.	365, 366, 367
		Motives to it.	367, 368
Why Saul called Paul,	2	Vide Blessing.	
Paul's sins,	3	Publick Praises, vid. Publick Prayer.	
His serviceablenesse,	3, 4		
His learning.	6	Preaching.	
Of the Name Paul being prefixed before his Epistles.	10, 11	Christ is the only object of our Preaching,	557
That argues them to be of Divine Authority.	11	When Christ is Preached,	557, 558, 559
Why he styles himself an Apostle of Jesus Christ.	31	Prefumption.	
Peace.		Signes of Prefumption.	350, 351
Peace from God and Christ earnestly to be prayed for.	108	Principles.	
Wherein it consisteth, how wrought and preserved,	109, 110, &c.	Two distinct Principles in every regenerate man.	271, 272
What are the effects of it,	114, 115	Of Principles in general.	525, 526, 527
Directions for the attaining of it,	116	Of the Principles of a godly man.	527, 528, 529
People as related to Minister, Vide Ministers.		Principles of flesh, vid. Flesh.	
Perseverance.		Professours.	
'Tis Perseverance that is the crown of holinesse.	458	Carnal Professours make great opposition to the Ministry.	261, 262, 263
Hopefull beginnings in the wayes of Religion are not enough without Perseverance.	459	Who are they which Professe Religion meerly upon carnal ends,	263, 264, &c.
Propositions clearing it.	459, 460, 461	Promises.	
Prayer.		God hath made many Promises to us in Christ.	581
		Propositions clearing it.	581, 582, 583, 584
The most eminent in gifts and graces still need the Prayers of the meanest.	359	Of the severall sorts of Promises.	585, 586
Reasons of it,	360	Promises are the executions of Gods Decrees.	587
People ought to Pray for their Minister,	361, 362, 363	No wicked man hath any right to the Promises.	ibid.
Prayers to be made not only privately but publickly.	375	The Promises suppose faith.	588
Reasons of it.	375, 376	God hath sealed them to us.	ibid.
		'Tis great skill to make use of the Promises.	589
		Y y y y	The



## An Alphabetical Table.

*The Promises are all confirmed in Christ,*

591

*Propositions clearing it,* 591, 592,

593

*What a Christian should doe that doubts whether the Promises belong to him, or no.* 596, 597, 598

*The Promises of God will never be altered.* 598, 599

*The Promises give glory to God, both as made by him, and as believed by us.*

600, 601

*Wherein the glory of God is manifested in his Promises.* 601, 602

*How faith in the Promises gives glory to him.* 602, 603

*Our establishment in the Promises is the work of God alone* 605

*Propositions clearing it.* 606, 607

*Signs of our interest in the Promises.* 640

### Prudence.

*What is that holy Prudence that Ministers are to use in the exercise of their Ministerial power.* 678, 679

*Wherein it doth consist.* 680, 681

## R

### Raising.

**W***hat is implied in Gods Raising from the dead.* 328, 329

### Rejoycing.

*An holy Rejoycing and glorying in the graces of God lawfull,* 380

*What is required to this holy Rejoycing,* 380, 381

*In what respect 'tis lawfull.* 381

*Wherein unlawfull.* 382, 383

### Religion.

*Religion opposed by two sorts of people,* 262

*Who are those who professe Religion onely upon carnal grounds.* 263, 264,

&c.

## S

### Saints.

**G***od of great sinners oft makes eminent Saints.* 2

*Reasons for it.* 4, 5

*All that are of the Church are Saints by profession, and ought to be so by conversation.* 83

*Of the nature of real Saintship.* 86, 87, 89

*Two motives to it.* 88, 89

*Saints ought to joyne themselves in a Church-way.* 91

*Yet some reasons may excuse them.* 90

*What those reasons are,* 91, 92

*What reasons are not justifiable.* 93,

94

*The soul of the poorest Saint not to be neglected.* 94

### Salvation.

*The Salvation of believers is promoted by their suffering for Christ.* 228

*There is a two-fold Salvation, temporal and spiritual.* 241

*The Salvation of Gods people is furthered by all his dispensations.* 242

*What this salvation doth imply.* 242, 243

*Two sorts of dispensations whereby Salvation is promoted.* 244

### Saviour.

*Our Saviour how called Jesus Christ.* 1, 24, 26

*How Christ is a Saviour.* 25

*What kind of Saviour he is,* 26

*Vide Jesus.*

### Saul.

*Why Saul was called Paul.* 2

### Scripture.

*The Penmen of the holy Scriptures were instruments, not the authors.* 12

*We are to rest satisfied with the style and method of Scripture,* 12

*The*



## An Alphabetical Table.

<i>The authority of Scripture not to be questioned,</i> 13.	<i>The reasons of it,</i> 98
<i>Four considerations whereby to arme our selves against the opposers of Scripture</i> 13, 14	<i>Gods Spiritual works upon his people are not only for their, but also for others good,</i> 179
<i>Sealing.</i>	<i>Two kinds of Spiritual gifts,</i> <i>ibid.</i>
<i>The people of God are his Sealed ones,</i> 625	<i>What are these Spiritual things whereby we may be serviceable to others,</i> 180, 181
<i>Propositions clearing it,</i> 625, 626	<i>Suffering.</i>
<i>What the Sealing of the godly implies,</i> 626, 627, 628, 629	<i>What is implied in the Sufferings of Christ,</i> 196, 197
<i>The description of the Sealing of Gods Spirit,</i> 632, 633, 634, &c.	<i>What in the Sufferings of Christ abounding,</i> 197
<i>Whether all the people of God be his Sealed ones,</i> 645, 646	<i>The profession of Christ is accompanied with Sufferings sometimes excessive,</i> <i>ibid.</i>
<i>How this Sealing may be kept,</i> 647, 648	<i>Propositions clearing it,</i> 198, 199, 200
<i>Self-confidence, Vide Confidence.</i>	<i>What is required in our Suffering for Christ ex parte objecti,</i> 201, 202, 203
<i>Simplicity.</i>	<i>What ex parte subjecti,</i> 205, 206, 207, 208
<i>Godly Simplicity affords much comfort,</i> 404	<i>How Christ makes our comforts to abound in our Sufferings for him,</i> 210
<i>Of the nature of Simplicity, as it relateth to God,</i> 405, 406, 407, 408, &c.	<i>The advantages of our Suffering for Christ,</i> 213
<i>As it relateth to man,</i> 411, 412	<i>Our Sufferings for Christ are for the Churches good,</i> 218, 219
<i>Sincerity.</i>	<i>Four Propositions clearing it,</i> 220, 221
<i>How 'tis called godly Sincerity,</i> 413	<i>The general good of such Sufferings is Gods glory, and the Gospels enlargement</i> 222
<i>Godly Sincerity carries a man above all other things to God himself,</i> 414	<i>Others Sufferings for Christ may much conduce to our comfort and salvation,</i> 223
<i>What it is in God that a Sincere heart looks upon,</i> 415, 416	<i>Three things premised concerning such Sufferings,</i> 223, 224
<i>Propositions discovering the nature and effects of godly Sincerity,</i> 418, 419, 420	<i>How our Sufferings for Christ work our comfort,</i> 225, 226, 227
<i>Spirit.</i>	<i>How they promote our salvation,</i> 228, 229, 230
<i>How the Spirit witnesseth with our consciences,</i> 390	<i>Sufferings not barely in themselves, but as improved by patience, conduce to our salvation,</i> 232
<i>Spiritual.</i>	<i>Communion with those that Suffer for Christ a sure way to interest us in their glory and comfort.</i> 251
<i>Spiritual mercies to be desired before temporal,</i> 96	<i>Two propositions clearing it,</i> 251, 252
<i>A natural man cannot desire Spiritual things,</i> <i>ibid.</i>	<i>The reasons of it.</i> 253, 254
<i>Only the regenerate,</i> 97	<i>Vid. Afflictions.</i>
<i>What are the qualifications which provoke the godly to esteem Spiritual favours before others,</i> <i>ibid.</i>	<i>Y y y y 2 Swearing</i>



## An Alphabetical Table.

### Swearing.

*'Tis lawfull to Swear under the Gospel upon urgent occasions after a right manner,* 658,668,669  
*Whether it be lawfull to Swear by any creature,* 663  
*How we may mention a creature in an oath, and not Swear by it.* 664  
*How and when we may lawfully Swear.*  
*Motives against ordinary Swearing,* 672  
*The excuses and cavils for Swearing answered,* 673,674,675  
 675,676

### T

Thankfulnesse to God, vide  
 Blessing and Praising God.

### Timothy.

**O***F the name Timothy,* 41  
*Two things observed concerning him.* 41,42

### Trouble.

*Trouble whence it ariseth.* 323  
*God is both able and willing to help his people in hopelesse Troubles,* 325,326,  
 327

### Truth.

*God is a God of Truth, and a true God,* 536  
*Propositions clearing the nature and kinds of Truth,* 537,538,539,540

*The truth of God is alwayes the same,*  
 575,576,577,578

### Trust.

*Two sorts of Trust humane and divine,* 301  
*What are the sinfull objects we are apt to Trust in,* 304,305,306,307,308  
*God always the proper object of our Trust.* 315  
*Propositions concerning our Trusting in God.* 315,316,317,318  
*What is the matter for which we Trust in him,* 318  
*What is required to our Trusting in the Lord,* 320,321,322  
*Of the excellency of this grace of Trusting in the Lord,* 322,323,324  
*There are motives to Trust in God, both from personal and general priviledges.* 349  
*Of the opposites to Trusting in God.* 350  
*The grace of Trusting in God cannot be perfect in this life.* 352  
*Trusting in God, and the use of means not to be separated.* 355

### W

### Wisdome.

**W***Hy the Wisdome of this world is called fleshly Wisdom,* 423  
*Ministers ought not to use fleshly Wisdom,* 423,424,425  
*Principles of fleshly Wisdom,* 426,427,  
 428,429,430,431

FINIS.



